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THE  
SERVANT OF THE LORD  
DESCRIBED AND VINDICATED,  
IN A  
S E R M O N,

Delivered at PROVIDENCE CHAPEL,  
Feb. 17, 1788.

BY  
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AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET;  
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And the *band of the Lord* shall be known toward his *servants*,  
and his *indignation* toward his *enemies*, Isa. lxvi. 14. Then  
shall ye *return* and *discern* between the *righteous* and the  
*twicked*, between him that *serveth God* and him that *serveth*  
*him not*, Mal. iii. 18.

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MDCCLXXXVIII.





A

# S E R M O N,

From 2 TIM. ii. 24, 25.

*And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.*

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THE apostle dedicates this and the former epistle to Timothy, of whom in the bowels of Christ he seems remarkably fond. He styles him *his own son in the faith*; not only because he had *begotten him in the bonds of the gospel*, for in this sense he had many sons, but because there seemed so much of the spiritual image and heavenly likeness of the father about him—I trust to send Timotheus; for I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state, Phil. ii. 20. and because of his dutiful deportment and diligent attendance and readiness to assist his venerable father in the word and work of the Lord—But you know the proof of Timothy, that as a son with the father he hath served with me in the gospel, verse 22. And because there seemed so strong an

affection in Timothy to his aged sire in the faith, with whom he could seldom part dry eyed, *I thank my God* (says Paul the aged), *whom I serve from my fore-fathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.*  
 2 Tim. i. ~~3~~ 4

*Phil  
17.* When the apostle wrote this epistle he was about taking his leave of the world, and of his dearly beloved son. It was written just before Paul was brought before Nero the Emperor the second time, where he received sentence and lost his head, but not his covenant head. Paul was aware that his departure would greatly affect Timothy; and the removal of him who had been so long set for the defence of the gospel, would open a way for the second in command to appear at the front, and in the hottest of the battle; he therefore labours hard to comfort him, counsel him, and caution him; he advertises him and advises him, instructs and encourages him.

He comforts him by telling him of the unfeigned faith that was in him, which dwelt first in his grandmother and in his mother, and Paul was persuaded that it dwelt in him also. He informs him that God had not given him the *spirit of fear, but of power*, to support and fortify; *of love*, to enlarge, attract, and embolden; and *of a sound mind*, to keep him heavenly, steadfast in the truth, and valiant for it. He counsels him

him not to be ashamed of the *testimony of the Lord*, or of the gospel which the Lord himself had testified; nor to be ashamed of *Paul the Lord's prisoner*, who was then imprisoned for the sake of his Lord and his word, and to keep a good conscience toward him.

He counsels him to be a *partaker of the afflictions of the gospel*, or of the cruelties that men or devils might be permitted to inflict on the adherents to it, knowing that if he *suffered with Christ he should reign with him. 2 Tim 2. 12*

He cautions him to beware of Alexander the coppersmith, who had done him much evil, and greatly withstood Paul and his gospel, which I suppose was done before the tribunal of Nero. He cautions him against tickling itching ears, that will be calling for candour, who will require heaps of teachers to scratch them, none being able long to please.

He advertises him that the *time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*; that *many will be lovers of themselves*, and envy every faithful servant that the Lord owns as rivals of their own honour; *covetous*, aiming more at the fleece than the flock; at a stock in hand, independent of Providence, instead of the good of souls;—*boasters* of their own merit and carnal learning; *proud*—wearing long robes, despising the poor and illiterate, attempting to affect the passions of depraved nature by cunning artifice and the empty sound of eloquent oratory; *unthankful* for the



spoils their profession brings in; and *unboly* in heart and life; *without natural affection* for them that eclipse their glory; *truce-breakers*, who swear and vow to preach the doctrines of the Lord, and then turn Arminians; *false accusers*, calling others Antinomians when themselves are nothing else; *incontinent*, aiming more at old widows and their pockets than at espousing souls to Christ or making them rich in faith; *fierce* opposers of the illiterate ones that God sends out; *despisers* of *those* that are made good by the Holy Ghost; *traitors*, who will betray half the truths of the Bible to swim in the stream of applause; pawn conscience, and expose it to damnation, for the empty titles of candid men, or men of moderate principles; *beady* or headstrong, not against errors, nor in defence of truth, but against others in behalf of their own honour; how can they believe that receive honour one of another, and not that honour that cometh from God only? *high minded*, not in heavenly things, but aiming at high and lofty phrases, to please the worldly wise, embalm the pharisee, charm the hypocrite, and deceive the simple with swelling words of vanity; making a pompous appearance, climbing in dress to the height of the session, to live in a lofty stile, associating with those of the highest rank, and disdaining to condescend to men of low degree; *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*; men that can set and play glees upon a harpsichord for two hours together, and then get into

*John*  
5 44

into a pulpit and preach against *party spirit*, and prove all that he says by the cords of his instrument; *having a form of godliness*, desiring to mimic the learned and dignified priest, using service-books for the want of spiritual matter to serve with; *denying the power of godliness* in others, calling it enthusiasm and antinomianism, in order to bring the grace of God, the servants of God, and divine inspiration, into contempt; from such Paul bids his son *turn away*, lest they should corrupt him. *They creep into houses*, to prejudice the minds of people against the servants of the Lord, as they of the circumcision used to do, who subverted whole houses; *ever learning* scraps of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Paul advises his son to *flee youthful lusts*, to follow righteousness in heart and life; *faith* also, the object of it; the doctrines of it, the grace of it, the exercise of it, and the life of it. *Charity*, or love to God as the supreme object; and to the saints, the objects of God's love, or to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in *sincerity* and *truth*; and to *follow peace with all that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*; but not with them that call on the Lord to bless their slander, ridicule, or villany.

He instructs him, telling him that in a great house, as God's church is, *there are not only vessels of gold*—that is, there are not only vessels of

mercy, with precious and tried faith in them; and vessels of silver, purified and made white; but there are *vessels of wood*, barren trees, dry sticks, fruitless professors, and withered branches, fit for nothing but fuel; and *vessels of earth*, without any divine treasure in them, vessels of dishonour; *If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour*, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Paul encourages his son to *shew himself approved unto God*, that men might see that he was one whom God approved, *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*, describing the law and the gospel, the saint and the sinner; *giving a portion to seven, and also to eight*, Eccl. xi. 2. a portion to the church of God, and to the synagogue of Satan, feeding the family of heaven with *milk and meat*, and the hardened hypocrite *with judgment*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Thus much by way of introduction to my text. I shall now consider the words in order as they lay before me, which are introduced thus: But foolish or unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves*: which for method's sake, I will endeavour to do in the following manner.



1st. Describe the servant of the Lord in contradistinction from those who call themselves so, or are by others *falsely so called*.

2dly. Shew you, first in the negative, and then in the positive, what is not, and what is meant by the word STRIVE, in the text; or describe lawful and unlawful strife. 29

3dly. Shew you his *gentleness*, and how all sorts of men will try it more or less. 45

4thly. Describe his aptness, or aptitude to teach, and the unaptness of pretenders to that work, with the reasons for it. 54

5thly. Treat of his *patience*, and describe those who are said to wear it out. 57

6thly. Define the spiritual *meekness* in my text, and wherein it differs from the candour of hypocrites, and 66

7thly, and lastly. The persons with whom this meekness is to be used, namely, *those that oppose themselves*.

1st. I am to describe the Lord's servant in contradistinction from those who call themselves so, or are by others *falsely so called*. All are not the Lord's servants who *call him master*; Judas called him so, and yet *was a devil*, and at last the devil his master entered into him, and let all men see whose servant he was; he was not without *candour* to himself, nor the appearance of good works; he reprov'd the Saviour, and poor Mary also, the first for permitting, and the latter for making

making waste of the funeral ointment; pretended great love to the poor, but he aimed at nothing but money, therefore the searcher of all hearts gratified him with bearing the bag, or keeping the common stock; which he did, not as the Lord's servant, to relieve the poor followers; and defray the travelling expences of the Lord's retinue, but to act the part of a thief, make a private purse for himself, starve the family of God, and sell the master of the household for *thirty pieces of silver*, in order to get a stock in hand, independent of Providence, and to prevent the perilous adventure of going out to preach *without purse or scrip*.

2dly. They are not all the Lord's servants who call him by that name. Many will say unto him in the great day, Lord! Lord! who will never be admitted into the family. It is true, *no man can call Jesus Lord, or his Lord*, that is, with the testimony of a good conscience, but by the Holy Ghost: Yet the *root of all evil*, the *love of money*, has led the devil's servants to call him so, while scripture and conscience have given them the lie to their face. Balaam said unto Balack's servant, *If Balack would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do more or less*, Numb. xxii. 18. Yet his *will and inclination* lead him to tempt the Almighty with a seven times sevenfold sacrifice; and 'tis well known, that he would have sold himself to the devil, and the heritage of heaven also, for

an independence; or else, why did he so often go to seek for *incantments*, if he did not approve of the devil's service, seek the devil's aid, and depend on his arm for wisdom, for support, and direction? It was with a shew of much *candour* for Balack and the incestuous offspring of Lot, that he was brought to acknowledge that God was not man that he should lie as himself could, nor the son of man that he should repent of blessing Israel, as himself could heartily repent for labouring so long for so little profit.

It is true, he knew something of the holy law of God, and of God's hatred to sin, by the advice that he gave to Balack, in order to set a trap for Israel, to entangle them in sin, and awake the wrath of God against them, as it is written, *Behold these caused the children of Israel through the council of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation*, Numb. xxxi. 16. Nor was Balaam without some glimpse of the Saviour; the poor ass upon which he rode had seen the *angel of the covenant* and the *flaming sword of justice* drawn against her rider, which is more than one half of our present *evangelists* (falsely so called) have seen; who, like the *foolish prophets*, follow their own spirit and have seen nothing, Ezek. xiii. 3. Balaam had perceived his eyes to be opened—he had seen the sword of justice in the visions of God—fell into a trance at the sight of it—saw the star of Jacob—the destruc-



destruction of Moab—the damnation of Amaleck—the victory of Israel—the glorious death of the righteous, and desired that his last end might be like theirs. But his *candour* for Moab, and his love for *independency* swallowed up all; *he counselled Balack to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, and in his heart, he loved the wages of unrighteousness*; which ended his *candour* and love to *independency* by the sword of Israel, and brought him to the company of those *inchanters*, whose *incantments* he had so often sought, both by *prayer* and *sacrifice*.

3dly. A man may have a ministerial gift, which may be much admired, and much followed, and whatever use it may be of to the church, in order to purge the flour, and blow away the chaff from the wheat, or draw away the hypocrites from the upright, yet we know, those *that run before they are sent shall not profit the people at all*,

2 *Jer. xxiii. 32. they are called wells, but there is*  
 2 17 *no drawing water out of them, for they are called*  
*wells without water*; they are called *clouds*, on  
*Isaiah*  
 12 *the account of their pompous and popular appearance, but there is no water for them that are thirsty, nor floods for the dry ground, for they are clouds without rain: they are called musical instruments, none give more sound than they do, but no quickening power attends their noise, for they are said to be instruments without life-giving sound, so that no spiritual soldier*

knows what is piped or harped, and as the sound is uncertain, who can prepare for the battle? they are called *stars*, as the seven angels of the seven churches are, but no vessel of mercy can steer his course by them; they know nothing of the day star, or of the morning star, nor of him that maketh the *seven stars and Orion*, and turns *the shadow of death into the morning*; but they are called *wandering stars*, compared to glutinous vapours, exhaled from the bogs of the earth by the rays of the sun, and cast down with their false rays, by the nightly damps of the atmosphere.

They are called *lamps*, which serve to light others, but always go out themselves about midnight, or before the morning appears, which will be the midnight cry of all hypocrites, and no wonder, when there is no *oil in their vessels*; and if they have no oil for themselves, there is no likelihood of poor men, who fall among the thieves, namely, Satan, sin, and death; there is no oil in these vessels to pour into the wounds of a bleeding conscience, no new wine in these old bottles for those that are of an heavy heart; their own lamps are gone out, nor is there any of the oil of joy, which is to be given in exchange for mourning, much less can the garments of praise be brought forth in exchange for the spirit of heaviness.

Whatever use these gifts may be of to alarm insensible consciences, or purge the church of God

God from light, vain, and trifling hypocrites 'tis plain there is nothing but damnation for them in the end, whether they make use of their *talent* or *pound*, or whether they *lay it up in a napkin*. If the *prince* give a gift to one of his servants, it shall [without fail] go out, or return to the prince at the year of jubilee, Ezek. xlv. 17. *The servant abideth not in the house ever, but his son's inheritance shall be his son's for them*, Ezek. xlv. 16. *the son abideth in the house ever.*

And 'tis clear that some of these servants will accuse the master himself of the want of *candour* in the great day: here, says one, *is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin*. This man seems to be one that had waited on ladies or attended a sideboard, yet he falls to accusing the master; *I knew that thou wast an austere man, one of a bad spirit, destitute of candour, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strewed*. You see this man contended for *candour*, though he owned the Lord had never *sowed* or *strewed* any thing in his heart; which serves to show, that those who make the greatest stir about universal charity, or *candour*, are the most destitute of grace. The Saviour answers him on the ground of his own argument; *Thou knewest that I was an austere man, reaping where I had not sowed, and gathering where I had not strewed*, thou oughtest therefore to have been the more careful, as thou hadst such a severe master

to



to deal with; *thou oughtest to have put my money into the bank*; yet sticks to the old prophecy as the Prince of Peace, who was *to receive his gift again at the year of liberty*, Ezek. xlvi. 17. and therefore adds, *that I might have received mine own gift with usury*, Matt. xxv. 27. Luke xix. 23. but never says a word about receiving the servant who had received the gift, pound, or talent. These are called servants, but neither of these are the servants intended in my text; these are legal servants, *servants of sin*, and *servants of Mammon*, though they daringly called the Lord Jesus their *master*, their *Lord*, and *their God*.

There are others who attend the word of God on purpose to learn to talk about religion; and having no inward heart-work to attend to, they make great proficiency in the head and tongue, and will learn to prate publicly in prayer; prate I say, because Wisdom calls them *prating fools, that shall fall*. They will attempt to call upon God in public prayer in behalf of others before a poor buffeted and tempted soul can beg for himself, or dares to adopt the language of the publican, and say, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. This is one of the children that we say are too witty to live; simple souls that have no eyes, and hypocrites that have no feeling, stand astonished at the clapper of his mouth, at his furious zeal, his undaunted courage, and the progress he makes with the unruly member of his head; and no wonder, for there is no strife between the devil and

and he; Satan knows the *kingdom of God is not in word* as well as we do, nor is he afraid of the *speech of them that are puffed up*; if he was he would be afraid of his own work. Now the common labours of the day begin to be burthensome to him, and idleness to gain ground; his call to the ministry seems clear; his abilities are sufficient for the pulpit, with a little human scouring, and a few gestures of the body, and some of Master Merryman's antic motions with the hand, which may be learnt at certain places of exhibition, at a mountebank stage, or at a playhouse, and these are all the qualifications he expects; and 'tis too often seen that such are admitted into churches by the most wealthy and most graceless of the people. Some of the poor may complain of the want of experience and power, but their attempts are often too feeble; the main supporters approve, and that is enough; and the preacher has nothing to do to endear himself to his friends but to accommodate himself to their humour, rub off the edge of God's sword with a little *candour*; connive at the sins of his patrons, pay his frequent visits and partake of their innocent amusements, and by these means he picks up a tolerable livelihood; then it is *like people like priest*; and if any complain for the want of power, they are *enthusiasts*; if they run away and get their food elsewhere, they are of a *party spirit*, and want to make divisions; if they mourn after the old deceased pastor who formerly

formerly fed them, they are bigots; and if they complain of too many hypocrites being taken into the church, their *narrow spirit* is condemned and *candour* enforced; and if God takes such a preacher off and sends one that is faithful, he lives as it were in a hornet's nest, unless he can burn these venomous insects out of the hole, or thrash off this chaff.

This man is called a servant in scripture, but not the Lord's servant; he is said *to serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but his own belly*. Such are like the papist fisherman, who took to study, and made some progress in the languages, on the account of which he was made a *Monk*, and after that a *Priest* of an higher order, and after that a *Bishop*; but through all these scenes of prosperity he would have a *net* spread upon his table cloth, to remind him of his mean origin; this mark of his unparalleled *humility* carried him higher, he commenced *Cardinal*, but still used the net; at last he got into the *Scorner's chair*, and then the net disappeared; and being asked the reason, he replied, "There is no call for the net now, for the fish is caught;" he fished for the *Popedom*, and he knew 'twas vain to cast the net again. If Demas cannot get a present portion in the church, it is ten to one but he goes into this present evil world again.

There is another sort of servants, who may properly be called *time-servers*; their service being according to the times in which they live.

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If they are likely to get into a church that is tolerably sound in the faith, they will act accordingly, preach against their own sentiments, condemn the very doctrines of their own heart, and advance the truths their souls abhor. The first step such a man takes is, to wriggle into the affections of his people; and when he has gained ground there, then to bring forth a little of the old store of Arminianism; but if the brat is too bare, then he covers the nakedness of it by the word *grace*, or some plain truth; and if this goes down, then he increases the baneful ingredients according as he perceives the mixture to operate, and by degrees the minds of the people get blinded, the keenness of their appetite abated, their judgment confused, and the great things of God are obscured and hid from their eyes; then he leads them any where; and if any smell him out, and begin to complain, his zeal will be fired, and *sharpness must be used*; this makes him the object of their fear; and being awed by his sacerdotal countenance, and confounded by his sophistic logic, they are obliged to throw open both heart and conscience to him, while he enshrines himself in the holy place where he ought not; and thus the free and self-will of lordly man becomes the rule of a poor oppressed people, instead of the revealed will of God; the confused judgment of such people is like a weather-cock, and is turned with every *wind of doctrine*. This man is fit for any company, society,

ciety, or pulpit.—He's a Calvinist by turns—an Arminian in heart—a Baxtarian by fits; and a Churchman if occasion requires. His gift is a precious jewel in his own eyes, and whichever way it turns, it prospers, or he prospers by it. He *becomes all things to all men* indeed; that he may gain the more, not for God, but for himself. This man is called a servant in scripture, but not the servant that is mentioned in my text, for he is said to be a servant of the Lord. But they that preach to please men cannot be the servants of Christ: *Gal 1 10.*

Which leads me to consider the second branch of this general head, which is to describe this servant of the Lord, in contradistinction from all others.

1st. He is one that is represented as *standing idle in the market place*; perhaps it may mean, that law and conscience were at work within him, and therefore he could not engage in the devil's service as usual; for 'tis a rare thing to find a sinner idle in this sense. His standing idle, may serve to shew, that the Lord's elect do not set themselves to work or attempt to go into the vineyard, until the master hires them; and they are in general such as no carnal man cares to hire. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* they reply, *because no man hath hired us: Go ye into the vineyard, and that which is right, that shall ye receive.* Here is their command, and the promise

both; go ye, and that which is right shall ye receive. These do not run before they are sent; they take not this office upon themselves until they are called of God as was Aaron; nor are they sent of men; it is the Lord that hires and sends his own servants.

It is true, Satan sends a great many preachers into the world and church both, but it is done to oppose the truth, and the advocates for it, and that in behalf of Satan's interest, on which account they bear their master's name, and are called, *ministers of Satan, whose end is to be according to their works*. There are men that make preachers and send them, whom God never sent, nor will ever own; but this is no wonder, for they used to make kings and princes in the same way: *They have made kings*, saith God, *but I knew it not, and princes but not by me*; and if they can make kings, why not doctors? But the Lord's servants are called, furnished, and sent by himself. *I am*, says Paul, *an apostle, not of man, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ. Gal. i. i.*

The apostle, in the chapter out of which our text is taken, represents the servants of the Lord in a two-fold character; first, *a labourer in the vineyard*, and secondly, *a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. The labourer must know the divine husbandman and the principal vine, before he can know any thing of the vineyard, or the branches of it, or be able to work in it.



it. God the father is the chief *husbandman*, Christ the *principal vine*, every believer a *branch*, and the whole church a *vineyard*. And these things must be known by every labourer, or inferior husbandman, who is called the Lord's servant in my text. *This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* If an experimental knowledge of these things is life eternal, then these things must be known by the Lord's servant before he can labour: Who can work that is dead? *He that laboureth*, says Paul, *must first be partaker of the fruits.* No preaching Christ crucified, till we know that our *old man is crucified with him*; a knowledge of this, *crucifies us to the world, and the world to us.* We must be planted together in the likeness of his death, before we shall know the value of it, and in the *likeness of his resurrection* also, and be begotten again to a lively hope by it, before we can preach Christ as the *the first fruits of them that slept.*

He must be partaker of the fruits, before he can labour. He cannot be a spiritual labourer, or a minister of the Spirit, till he is a partaker of the fruits of the Spirit. He must be a partaker of the Spirit of love, be brought to love God, Jesus Christ, his word, and all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, before he can be a minister of the Spirit. One glorious fruit of the Spirit is *faith*, and the Lord's labourers are called *faithful servants*; but graceless men cannot

be called faithful. To hear unbelievers preach faith, seems as great a contradiction as for *Python the Devil*, to call Paul and Silas servants of the most high God, which was true, but when he added, that shew unto us the way of salvation, it was a lye, for there is no salvation for devils. Satan by this shew of candour, expected some lenity to be shewn by the apostle; but Paul was not ignorant of his devices, he paid no respect to his candour, but charged him to come out of the damsel, and then Satan let Paul feel the effects of his spleen and bitterness: He set off into the heart of the damsel's master, stirred up a mob, and brought the servants of the *most high God* before the judgment seat, with this heavy charge, *these men being Jews do exceedingly trouble our city*, Acts xvi. 19, 20.

The husbandman that labours must *be a partaker of the fruits*; he cannot bring forth good fruits, till his own heart be made good; no man can *gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles*; he cannot bring forth the *fruits of the Spirit* till the Spirit be in him, nor can the ministry of a barren soul be fruitful. What knows a carnal man of God's *husbandry*? Spiritual labourers have the *fallow ground of the heart to plow up—thorns of carnal cares and covetousness to grub—clods to break—precious seed to bear—and incorruptible seed to sow—planting and watering to do*. He is to enforce *fruitfulness—describe four grapes and wild figs—observe what clusters have a blessing in them and what*

what *clusters are bitter*—which *branch* to encourage and which *branch* to cut at; for which business, none can furnish or qualify us but God himself, nor can there be either success or increase, without his direction and blessing.

Nor is it enough for a man to taste these fruits at his being first sent into the vineyard, he stands in need of them daily. The keepers of the vineyard have one hundred; an hundred fold in this life. 'Tis poor work, keeping a flock and not tasting the milk of the flock. Sad work, *to tread the wine press and suffer thirst*, which our Master did; it is dreadful work *to keep a vineyard and not taste the fruit of the vineyard*, both in a spiritual and temporal sense. In short, the labourer needs fruits and fortitude too, especially as there are so many *little foxes that spoil the vines*, and are so subtle and busy about them that have *tender grapes*.

The Lord's servant must serve his master with nothing but what is his master's own. He must plow with his master's heifer—bear his master's yoke—sow his master's seed—go by his master's direction, and aim at his master's honour. He must give no heed to *old wives fables*, nor turn aside from the way of the vineyard, though Jezebel the prophets should attempt to teach the servants of the Lord.

2dly. Paul calls this servant in my text, *a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. If he is a good soldier, he is enlisted, and, under a divine power on the



will, he becomes a willing volunteer ; his encouragement and fortitude arise from the view that he has of the banner of divine and everlasting love being displayed over him, and from the good cheer of the *banqueting house*. He will make but a poor recruiting serjeant that never received the king's bounty, and unless he is in present pay and good quarters himself, in vain he beats up for volunteers. He that *feeds upon Christ* and his word, *drinks the new wine of the kingdom*, and makes God his *dwelling place*, will make a good recruiting officer, because he can speak cheerfully, comfortably, feelingly, and knowingly, about the Captain of our salvation, and the glorious privileges of being quartered in the *cleft of the rock*, of the *penny a day* promised, and of the king's bounty that is given.

The apostle tells us that this servant of the Lord is a warrior : *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*. He that kneeled down to drink water at the river Jordan was sent back as not fit for the field, none but those that *lapped like a dog* were to engage in the Lord's battle, Judges vii. 5. If bowing the knee to the world renders a man unfit for this military service, what shall we say of soldiers that aim at nothing else but the things of this life, *savour not the things of God*, but those of men, and *load themselves with thick clay* ?

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This servant or soldier is chosen by his Lord, and to please his Lord should be his chief aim. *That he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier*, says Paul, he is to receive all his orders from the *Captain of his salvation*, do all in his name, depend on his strength, go by his rules, and use his spiritual weapons. Our captain has not made any old women commanders in chief of his forces, nor has he committed the word of command to them; this would look as if the God of armies had left the camp; *he suffers not a woman to be heard* in his household, much less in his wars. If Jezebel choose four hundred of Satan's soldiers, and keep them at her own table, and use them in her service, they will be expected to obey her orders, because she chooses, enlists, and feeds them. But this servant in my text belongs to another master, and another troop, the Lord chooses him, and he is to *please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier*.

This servant or soldier is commanded to endure hardness. There are at times hard labour and hard fare; soldiers are seldom much regarded, though they are, under God, the defence of a nation, and much looked to in public calamity. So a good soldier of Christ Jesus is often sought after and looked to, when conscience is besieged, diseases make inroads on a sinner's vitals, and the devil is discovered in full possession of the fort and palace, and when the *midnight cry* comes,  
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these soldiers will appear to be as Elisha was to king Joash, *the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof*. The lamps and watchfulness of the Lord's servants have kept them in readiness, while the foolish virgins, who have contented themselves with the *law* as the light of their feet, and the only lamps of their path, will go out, they having paid no regard to *the salvation of God, which is a lamp that burneth*; no regard to the *oil of gladness*, nor the *oil of joy*, which alone can keep it burning; *this light of the righteous rejoiceth, when the lamp of the wicked is put out. Prov. 13. 9.*

A soldier of Christ has many hard speeches to bear, cruel mockings to endure, hard hearts to besiege, hardened rebels to engage, and unrelenting devils to oppose and resist, who neither sweat nor tire. These, with their human allies, will continue to compass about the beloved city, nor will they ever raise the siege, till Zion is established in heaven, and they imprisoned in hell.

This servant of the Lord, in his military character, is commanded to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. If so, he must be one that is acquainted with the influence of grace, and is in union with Christ Jesus; no man can be strong in grace that never felt it, nor in Christ Jesus that is not united to him. A speculative knowledge of Christ, and a barren notion of grace, will afford little support or comfort to those *whose eyes never saw, whose ears never heard, and whose hands never handled the word of life*. Grace must



be upon him that is the Lord's servant; if sin be subdued in him, 'tis grace that subdues it, and grace shall reign through the righteousness of Christ to eternal life; sin will have dominion over those that are destitute of grace, and such are the servants of sin, not servants of the Lord. If they are *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, great grace must be unto them, and Christ must be formed in them, and be enjoyed by them as the *hope of glory*, or they cannot be strong either in grace or in him. The Lord is the strength of his people, and his *strength is made perfect in their weakness*, for he strengthens them with his Spirit's might in the inner man; such a one is *strong in grace*, and well he may, when the *Lord is the strength of his heart and his portion for ever*.

To be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, is to have the *faith of God's elect*, which is a faith produced by the *operation of God*, firmly fixed on Christ, and which worketh by a feeling sense of God's everlasting love, shed abroad in the heart; such servants or soldiers will ascribe all their victories to this; saying, nay, *but in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us*.

The apostle advises this servant or soldier of the Lord, to *put on the whole armour of God that he may be able to stand*. He allows a servant of the Lord to put no confidence in the flesh—no trust  
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in old wives fables—no confidence in human wisdom, nor in excellency of speech, or swelling words of vanity—to yield to nothing but a divine demonstration, nor to submit to any thing short of spiritual power; that our *faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*: and all this caution is, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect, and to exclude the glory of salvation from an arm of flesh; for a jealous God will never give his glory to another, nor his praise to popish images.

The apostle tells us that God's armour must be put on, that we may be able to stand and withstand. No helmer is to be worn by the Lord's servants, but Christ the hope of Israel, the hope of salvation, and the hope of glory. No breast-plate but the righteousness of God by faith; the righteousness that God the Saviour wrought out, that God the Father accepts and imputes, and faith puts on, which is in Christ, whose name is *Jehovah our Righteousness*. No shield but that which Abraham and David took; *the Lord is my shield and the lifter up of my head*. No sword but that of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*. No prayers but those indited by the spirit of supplication. No ammunition shoes, but the preparations of the gospel of peace, which assures the heart of an alliance with God though at war with the world; to engage without these, is to make a vain attempt upon this world,

world, or the God of it. The man that engages in God's work while he is a stranger to the *fruits of the spirit*, and to *Christ the first fruit*, is no minister of the new testament, no evangelist, no minister of the spirit. He may be an *bireling*, or a *minister of the letter*, but no man can partake of his grace, for he has none. He that is a stranger to grace, to Christ, and to his own personal election, is no soldier of Christ Jesus, nor is it likely he should ever please him, because he has not *chosen him to be a soldier*. Unbelievers cannot fight the good fight of faith, consequently cannot please God as soldiers, for without faith 'tis impossible to please him; for graceless, unrenewed, unpanoplied men to set themselves against the world, while they are of it, and against sin while in bondage to it, and against the devil while he reigns in their hearts and leads them captive at his will, is like *Satan casting out Satan*. Keep this servant of the Lord in your eye in this his twofold character, as *a labourer in the vineyard*, and a *good soldier of Jesus Christ*, while I dismiss this part of the subject, and pass on to my second general head, which is to shew you; First, in the negative; secondly, in the positive, what is not, and what is meant by the word *strive* in my text, or describe lawful and unlawful *strife*. 2

Graceless ministers and empty professors will never *strive lawfully*; all their strife is in behalf of themselves. Their striving is, either to get a name,



name, get a livelihood, keep a restless conscience quiet, or else, they preach to oppose others and injure them in the work of the Lord, charging them in their sermons with being influenced with Antinomianism, party zeal, and a bad spirit, which is in fact charging them with the spirit of the devil; but no wonder, they called the master of the house Belzebub, accused him of breaking the law, and profaning the sabbath, both which are Antinomianism, and a bad spirit; if the master fared thus, what can the household expect? the servant is not above his Lord. *Such indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to another's bonds,* Phil. i. 15, 16. These can never *strive lawfully*, because they are destitute of that power that maintains a lawful strife. A labourer in the Lord's vineyard will strive against the errors and desperate profanity of the wicked, notwithstanding the cruel usage, and strong opposition that may be made against him; and the spirit of God will make them maintain this strife and stand their ground at it as long as he pleases. *Noah was an husbandman, and a labourer agreeable to my text, in both senses of the word, for he was a preacher of righteousness, he strove with the Antediluvians for upwards of an hundred years, till God put an end to the strife, and caused those that strove with him to perish,* Isai. xli. 11. saying,  
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*My spirit shall not always strive with man, seeing he is flesh, Gen. vi. 3. this is lawful strife.*

2dly. When graceless men get into pulpits, they set themselves against the faith of the gospel, being ignorant of it; and therefore in order to keep up their popularity, they charge it with licentiousness, and to amuse and blind a simple people, they turn aside to *vain jangling*, being strangers to gospel consistency, they desire to be *teachers of the law*, knowing neither *what they say*, nor *whereof they affirm*. These set the law against the promises of God, and by their unbelief try to make the faith of God without effect. These are not to be admitted into the houses of the saints, nor are we to bid them God speed, lest we partake of their evil deeds: the saints of God are all to unite as the heart of one man to oppose such as these, and rescue the faith which they want to *make void* out of their hands, and not to flinch from this work, nor be afraid of the opponents. *Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries*, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you, of salvation, and that of God, Phil. i. 27, 28. this is *lawful strife*.

3dly. A labourer in the Lord's vineyard is to enlarge his work as much as possible, and to abide the longest where he sees he is most useful; and as the Lord's labourers have different gifts, one after this manner and another after that, they

they are to visit the churches occasionally, and not to be discouraged though here and there a Diotrephes will shut them out, and prate against them with malicious words, in order to keep the pre-eminence, 3 John ix. 10. and not only visit the churches, but break up fresh ground and endeavour to raise up new plantations, which the sluggard refuseth to do by reason of the cold. 'Tis often seen that God keeps his servants labouring in dark and barren parts of the earth till they are stocked with large store of experience and knowledge, and then uses them at the *opening of the gates and in the high places of the city: Yea so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation*, Rom. xv. 20. but where he was not named; this is *lawful strife*.

4thly. A labourer in the Lord's vineyard will often be troubled with the *little foxes* that spoil the vines; which foxes are false prophets—*thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts*, Ezek. xiii. 4. called foxes because of their cunning and subtlety, and the stink that they make in the *nostrils of God*. These bring in *damnable heresies* to oppose the truth, and try to undermine the walls of salvation, prate against divine inspiration, and cavil at faith and a good conscience; whilst *separating the vile from the precious*, is doing the work of a party spirit; declaring the whole counsel of God faithfully, is doing the work of a bad spirit, to *hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*,



*conscience*, is to be an Antinomian; to hold Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, and the end of the commandment, to be charity; and both these in the heart by the Spirit as the righteousness of the law fulfilled in them, is making void the law; enforcing a *union with Christ*, and a walk in the spirit, is setting aside the rule of life; and preaching the grace of God, is called rocking the cradle of the devil; preaching one's own testimony is preaching self; refusing confederacy with the wicked is singularity; and he must be taken down in a public pulpit that magnifies his office:—While preaching to please men is doing the work of an evangelist; preaching philosophy is doing the work of a learned divine; he that preaches the principles of flesh and blood is a man of moderation; and he that gives up the truth, gives into errors, connives at slander, and justifies the wicked, is a man of candour.—I cannot think but that these things will go by other names in the great day of judgment; I <sup>2 Cor.</sup> think it will be called walking in craftiness, and <sup>4 2</sup> handling the word of God deceitfully. These men take away the hedge of God's vineyard, and let the *wild boar out of the forest into it*.

The Lord look down in pity and *visit this vine*, and enable his servants to *stand in the gaps*, and *make up the breaches*; for there are many who are trying to remove the *bounds* that God has set, and the fences that discriminating grace has made, and so to lay the inclosures of God level with the

common fields, barren heaths, and parched places of the wilderness, which shall never know when good cometh. To separate the vile from the precious is God's command; and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, is the duty of every Christian, as well as the ministerial servants of the Lord; in this work they are to stand like an iron pillar or a brazen wall. Though we may have some cause to complain, as Jeremiah did, *Who is me my mother that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention*, Jer. xv. 10. yet this is lawful strife.

5thly. It is usual for those who are called out of the common way, or raised up for any particular work, if they are useful, to meet with the strongest opposition, sometimes from God's own children, but especially from false brethren. Many opposers had Paul, who crept into houses, especially those of the circumcision, who made it their business to follow him from place to place in order to raise a storm against him. The Saviour's parable was verified when the steward, namely the priestly tribe, was put out of his stewardship; he then lessened the debts of sinners to God, in order to be received into their houses.—  
*Luke*  
*16. 1. y.* The apostle complains of such, that they were enemies to the cross of Christ; that they subverted whole houses, teaching things that they ought not; and as they hypocritically laboured in a subterraneous way, the apostle adopted their diligence; he taught the people publicly, and from house to house, endeavoured

endeavouring to warn every man, and teach every man: Whereunto I also labour, STRIVING according to his working which worketh in me mightily, Col. i. 28, 29. This is lawful strife.

6thly. This servant or soldier of the Lord is to endeavour to keep the field, and not like Ephraim, harnessed and carrying bows, turn back in the day of battle. The Lord's soldier must fight a good fight; he must be valiant for truth, and keep both his arms and armour; truth is his shield and buckler, and with this good thing he is never to part—on this he is never to turn his back; *he that is ashamed of me and my word, of him will I be ashamed.* In defence of truth, and against the enemies of it, *he is to resist unto blood* STRIVING against sin, Heb. xii. 4.

7thly. This labourer or soldier is not to regard every outcry that is made against him. When the sword of the spirit lays open a sinner's heart, or an hypocrite's empty profession, these are times that *sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness surprises the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Such as these will cry out against a bad spirit; too much bitterness is complained of; these will lay in wait for him that *reproves in the gate, crying out, Prophecy smoothes things—prophecy deceits—cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us; give us a little candour—make us kerchiefs, sew a few pillars under our arm holes, Ezek. xiii. 18.* The servant of the Lord is not to spare the devil for his crying;



now is the time for the good soldier to follow his blows, to *speake like the piercing of a sword, for the tongue of the wise is health*; now is the time to set fire to the *hole of the asp*, or lay the *ax to the root*; and if the iron be blunt, he must *whet the edge* (with prayer), or put forth more strength, and look up for wisdom, which is profitable to direct him where to cut. This is a work that the Lord's servant findeth to do, and he is to do it with all his might—which requires striving, and is *lawful strife*, because it is opposing them that STRIVE against the Lord. Jer. l. 24.

8thly. Not only are the servants of the Lord who labour in the word and doctrine commanded to strive, but every awakened sinner, who is compassed about with numberless sins, corruptions, and fears, which bring him into so many straits and difficulties; he is commanded to *strive to enter in at the straight gate*, notwithstanding the *many that will strive to enter in and shall not be able*. The people of God are to strive to assist their minister that the Lord sends them, when God has made it manifest in their consciences that he is sent by him; and not stand at the helm and watch to see which way the stream of public applause runs, but to watch the waters of life that make glad the city of God. Professors that aim at nothing but to take the strongest side, act like Alexander the coppersmith, and follow a multitude to do evil, in opposing the advocates for truth contrary to their own judgment

ment and conscience; such thrive in their profession no better than *Ahithophel*, whose counsel was turned to foolishness, 2 Sam. xv. 31. nor do I see how they can, for they *strive against their Maker*, Isa. xlv. 9. they *strive against the priest*, Hosea iv. 4. and they strive against the verdict of their own conscience. The saints of God are to strive to assist the public servants of the Lord in their work: *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*, Rom. xv. 30. This is *lawful striving*.

Having shewn you negatively what is not meant in my text, or is *lawful striving*, I come now to the second branch of this head, which is to shew you positively what is meant, or to describe *unlawful strife*.—*And the servant of the Lord must not strive*.

1st. Though it is lawful for every man of God to covet earnestly the best gifts, and to strive to *excel for the edifying of the church*; yet it is not lawful to slander and heap public reproach on others in order to keep up our own popularity, or to establish it, by belying those that God is pleased to send, much less are we to monopolize the churches of God into our hands, in order to keep others out, for fear of our own honour being eclipsed, much less are we to order churches that others have planted, to give the planter a final dismissal from his own work be-

fore they can receive any assistance, as some have done, at Woking in Surry; this is *lording it over our Lord's heritage*, and aiming at the garland in an unlawful way. *If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. for men to combine and strive in this manner is altogether unbecoming. *Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*; this strife is unlawful, and in this sense, *the servant of the Lord must not strive*.

2dly. We must not strive to oppose others in bearing their own testimony for God, nor be offended because they zealously defend the great truths that God has revealed to them, such as—the sovereignty of the Almighty—his personal election of his people—the proper deity of our Lord—particular redemption—and justification unto life by him; as some do who depart from the faith, turn their ears from the truth, and turn to fables, boasting of *free will* while they are *led captive by the devil at his will*; talking of power, while they are servants of sin; and boasting of merit and self-righteousness, while the sentence of the law is in them, and they are accused and condemned by *their own thoughts and conscience* all the day long. This is opposing God, his witnesses, and the testimony of his word, and taking part with the world, and endeavouring to set the church of God on a level with the wicked. *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of this earth,*  
but



*but woe to him that strives with his Maker, Isa. xlv. 9. This striving is unlawful; in this sense, the servant of the Lord must not strive.*

3dly. Setting the law perpetually before the children of God, which has a tendency to terrify weak believers, and to take their mind from the Saviour, as too many do in our days, who make Moses's law to be the truth of Moses's rod, and set it to *swallow up* all the promises of the gospel, as if the *law was against the promise of God*, or the promise an enemy to the law. Surely the covenant of grace was in being before the law, and as it is a better covenant, and established upon better promises, one would think (of the two) the covenant of grace ought to have an equal footing, if not the pre-eminence. But we have too many who are alive without the law, the law has not killed them, and being ignorant of the sentence of it, they are not dead to it. The law is to be used lawfully, to awaken careless sinners, and stop the mouths of proud boasters by bringing them in guilty by the law; *whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped.* *Rom 3 19* We are to insist upon the saints ordering their steps in God's word, and on love to the law after the inner man, not to a part thereof, but to the whole will of God; *then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments;* but this love to the law after the inner man is nonsense to them who are not acquainted with the new man. Those that can act contrary to the commanding will

will of the Saviour in the new testament, while they are contending for one chapter in the old, are the worst of Antinomians. *He that breaketh the least of these commandments, and teacheth men so, whether by word or example, shall be accounted least in the kingdom of heaven: But whosoever shall do and teach* (do first, and teach afterwards) shall be accounted great. 'Tis vain to enforce the law to others, unless they give us an account of its operation on their own hearts, and a copy of it in their own life. Those that tell us perpetually that the ten commandments are the believer's only and all-sufficient rule of life, seem to give us no account of themselves being quickened; they are for excluding the Saviour's commands, for not one of these has ever mentioned to me one word about the spiritual rule that Christ gave by Paul, which is easily to be accounted for; for spiritual circumcision, the new creature, and faith that worketh by love, are difficult points to handle, therefore 'tis better to wave the subject, and go to Sinai, for Ishmael has more friends than Isaac; more are the children of the desolate than those of the married wife, and by these means, simple souls are entertained with a vain jangle, which serves to make a stir, employ the minds of the people, give a job to the devil, and raise a multitude to ridicule the faith. We know the ten commandments are not of faith, nor do they give any direction about it; they say nothing about a Saviour, nor promise one, nor do they direct to his blood and right-

righteousness; they know nothing about repentance, they do not point to it, nor give it, nor accept it: it is *perfect doing* and *perfect love* that they require. But we are under a better teacher, namely the Spirit of promise, who teaches us to profit, and guides us into all truth; we are *taught of God to love one another*. The law tells me to love my neighbour as myself, but not better, as the gospel does, which says, we ought to *lay down our lives for the brethren—to be offered up upon the service of their faith—to spend and be spent for them*: Nor does it tell me to *deny myself daily*, nor to take up my *daily cross*, nor to set my face against the world and oppose it, nor yet to follow another in the regeneration, nor yet be crying to God day and night in prayer, nor give any direction concerning the various branches of divine worship, not a word about *baptism*, nor of *breaking bread*. If the ten commandments are the only rule, I cannot find any of these things in it; and yet, many live in the practice of these things, which convinces me that believers have got other rules of life beside the ten commandments, and a spiritual rule too, besides this narrow legal one which some contend for; they must take these things from some other part of the will of God. It must be confessed that unregenerate professors may have the *form of knowledge and of the truth in the (letter) of the law*, Rom. ii. 20. as well as the Jewish pharisees had, and these may make the law their rule of life as it certainly is, for they must



must abide by the rule if they will live therein; and such may be alive to this form of knowledge, and alive to this rule, and be as Paul was *alive without the law*, Rom. vii. 9. for the sinner's *form of knowledge*, and the *spiritual law of God* widely differ. Nevertheless, according to this form of knowledge, which is their rule, they may perform a deal of service, which is called *serving in the oldness of the letter*, Rom. vii. 6. these are the people who *sit in Moses's seat*, and give rules to the believer, and whatever they bid him observe, he by the spirit does; and if he does these things, having them in his heart, he will at last judge the others; but the main drift of Satan in this business is, to turn the eyes of weak believers from the Saviour and so bring them into bondage, as was the case with the Galatians. But the believer has more than a form of knowledge; God sends the law in its spiritual power to his heart, and by his spirit he writes it there, which leaves so deep and lasting an impression as never to be blotted out. He is the man that *knows righteousness, a man in whose heart is God's law*—he is not *alive without the law*, but *through the law alive to God*—he walks in newness of life—he *serves God in the newness of the spirit*, not in the oldness of the letter. This man is sure to be right, he is in the covenant, and has the law of God in his heart, grace subdues his sin, God *guides him with his eye*, and he serves God in the spirit—

spirit—he is circumcised, and *walks in love to God*—he is a *new creature* and follows *Christ in the regeneration*—he has a faith that worketh by love, and he is not idle, but abounds in the work of the Lord; and *as many as walk according to this rule, mercy on them and peace.* If there is truth in the scriptures, this man shall be eternally saved; this doctrine will do to die by; the former may do to talk about or to trade with in order to gain a penny for a livelihood, but it will afford no comfort at death, nor is it attended with any power in life. God sets not his seal to that; this is visible enough, and will be more so daily. The believer is the man that will perform good works; these vain janglers about the law only strive in vain; they say and do not. This is a *faithful saying*, and these things I will that *thou affirm constantly*, that *they which have believed in God* (for 'tis in vain that we expect them any where else) might be *careful to maintain good works*: these things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid *foolish questions*, and *genealogies*, and *contentions*, and *strivings about the law*; for they are *unprofitable and vain*, Titus iii. 8, 9. This is the unlawful strife of workmongers against the grace of God; but, in this sense, the *servant of the Lord must not strive.*

4thly. To lay in wait for him that reproves in the gate—to make a man an offender for a word—to ridicule a servant of God and his work, by falsehood, as the Rev. Mr. Belly at Gravesend did me,

me, who ridiculed the providence of God in my Bank of Faith, declaring that I would spiritualize *knives* and *forks*. "I have got my sermon," says he, "in my pocket, and am going to London to-morrow, to preach against the spirit of that book;" and he had got the materials in his pocket, nay, his behaviour was such as I am ashamed to mention, and the gentleman was so hurt at it, that he had a good mind to have wrote to me, but when he came to town he took care to let me know the plot by a friend; he knows the man, he lives at Dartford in Kent, and will prove it to his head. I think he is one of a party spirit, for he brought strife and contention with him though he preached against contention. He proved the necessity of harmony by the cords of his instrument, why then did he breed a jargon with me? I had never seen him nor spoke to him. He enforced *candour*, and exclaimed against blood-thirsty rage, and fell foul of the text that I had handled, cavilling at the very words of God, which he was pleased to stile immodest texts, which texts may shortly appear in print, and my sermons on them, if God permit. Can such conduct as this be of any use to the church of God? Can there be any edification in this? Will this make a bad spirit better? Is this the way to reconcile parties, or to cure a blood-thirsty disposition? Can this create any love among brethren? Can playing with words,  
enforcing



enforcing philosophy, treating of music, and cavilling at scripture, do any good? Is not this *STRIVING about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the bearers*, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. This is *unlawful strife*, and the *servant of the Lord must not strive*; which leads me to my third general head, which was to describe the *gentleness of the Lord's servant*, and how all sorts of men will try it more or less.

This *gentleness* in my text is not that tameness, laziness, or evenness of temper, which hypocrites so much admire, which is to be found in carnal men; this may be seen sometimes in *deists*, *dead pharisees*, *reformed professors*, or in a *hypocrite* when thunder-struck. Ahab seemed like a lion when the prophet met him; *Hast thou found me O mine enemy?* and he answered, *I have found thee*, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. I will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam, and the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls eat. These things *tamed Ahab*, and made him *gentle and tractable*; for he *rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his flesh, fasted, and went softly*; *Seest thou* (saith God) *how Ahab humbles himself?* 1 Kings xxi. from 22 to 29th verse. But this is not the gentleness meant in my text. Nicodemus was very *gentle* in the *senate* concerning the rigorous measures proposed

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posed to be used against Christ; *does our law judge a man before it hear him?* and he was the same when he came to Christ by night, but the Saviour gave him no thanks for it. The young man in the gospel, when he was commanded to sell all and follow Christ, was very *tame* and *gentle*, and *went away sorrowful*; but it was the sorrow of the world, that worketh death. The Laodiceans were *gentle*, *tame*, and *tractable*; they had no *fire of love*, nor *fiery zeal*, no rancour, spleen, nor bitterness; they needed nothing, nor did they *strive* for any thing, and this *carnal ease* and *sloth* is all the *gentleness* and *candour* that some call for. But 'tis not enough to be *lukewarm*, they must be either *cold* or *hot*, they must be with Christ or against him; they must either gather with him, or scatter abroad; serve God and hate mammon, or serve mammon and hate God. This gentleness springs from stupor, insensibility, carnal ease, and spiritual death; but the gentleness in my text is quite another thing; it is not forced by the withering vengeance of God, nor does it spring from an outward reformation, nor from an external perfuming or embalming of sinners by the word, which is sometimes the case where grace never reaches the heart or changes the soul.

2dly. There is a gentleness that at times influences even the servants of the Lord, which some of them are brought into by the fear of man, want of zeal, courage, and faithfulness, which

which they are brought into by associating with the unregenerate. The liberality of hypocrites, the feigned humility of legal workmongers, and the pretended candour of rotten fleshly professors, abates the edge of their zeal, betrays them to be partial in their trust, yield up half the good thing that is committed unto them to the children of lies; and, for the sake of unlawful peace, preach a universal gospel, and neglect the bounds that God has fixed, blunt the edge of God's sword, and pay no regard to the lines that he has drawn. This gentleness is not the gentleness that God commands in my text, for this is reprehensible. We find the angel or minister of the church in Thyatirah had much of this sort of gentleness; he was not only *gentle to all men*, but to *women* also, for he suffered *Jezebel to teach*, for which he was reproved.

The apostle had some preachers in his days that were gentle to these prophetesses; hence he writes, that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works, and that they should learn in silence with all subjection, but not to be *suffered to teach nor to usurp authority over the man*; for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived—but the woman being deceived was in the transgression, 1 Tim. chap. 2. The best account that Eve could give when the question was put home, *Woman what hast thou*



*thou done?* was this, *the serpent beguiled me*; and those that are so fond of writing against the Lord's servant, in order to bring his ministry into contempt, and injure the word of God, can say no more in their defence than their mother did—*the serpent beguiled me*.

Some in the apostle's days were not contented with carrying a private message by word of mouth, as Mary did to the apostles, nor with private converse, as Priscilla was, who were both converted women; one knew *the pardon of her sins*, and the other *the way of the Lord*; but Paul had some women that knew not the way of the Lord nor the pardon of sin, yet would be teachers; hence Timothy is commanded *to avoid old wives fables*, though others might adhere to them. Paul had no small trials from this quarter; hence he ordains that no widow shall be admitted to a proper relief under *threescore years of age having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints feet, if she hath diligently followed every good work*, 1 Tim. v. 9, 10.

Paul had some honourable women, and these he greatly honoured. We read also of real prophetesses in the apostle's days, but we have no prophecies from them against the servant of the Lord, nor any account of their prophesying to teach men in public. Mary and Elizabeth prophesied to each other; and such are ordered to  
teach

teach the younger women to be sober, guide the house, love their husbands and their children; to be discreet, chaste, and keepers at home, Titus ii. 4. Paul had female servants that waited on him and the churches, but none of them pretended to teach him from the press; they did not tell him in print that he was too little because he was let out of a window in a basket, nor that Apollos was too big by one half. Paul's servants laboured *with him*, not *against him*; they *succoured him*, and did not add affliction to his bonds; they carried his epistles and his messages by word of mouth—they waited on him instead of slandering him; they *were swift to hear him*, but *slow to teach him*; they were helpers with him, not plagues to him.

But Paul had other sorts of women, who knew not *the way of the Lord*, nor the *pardon of sin*, like Mary; nor the Spirit's work on the soul, like those good prophetesses; but empty, insolent, tyrannical, bold, daring, and imperious; these are they that would teach and usurp authority over the men, like some in our days, whose writings bear just as much resemblance with Hannah's song, Elizabeth's prophecy, and Mary's triumphs, as the history of Tom Thumb does with Milton's *Paradise Lost*; the glorious rays of the one, and the confused gloom of the other, make as great a contrast as the garden of Eden would with the regions of Lapland. With this sort of prophetesses the apostle had no little

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trouble;

trouble; and it appears there were too many preachers that were *gentle* towards them, knowing their warm inclination to *dictate to the second Adam*, as their poor grandmother had *done to the first*: hence the apostle adds, *But younger widows refuse; for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, having damnation because they have cast off their first faith*, 1 Tim. v. 11, 12. He goes on—and *withal they learn to be idle*—they would sooner break through the positive commands of God, and reprobate the ministry of his servants, than work for their bread; *wandering about from house to house*, says Paul; that is, to mump a livelihood under a pretence of religion, rather than *handle the spindle or the distaff*, or *look well to her own household*, Prov. xxxi. 19. *And not only idle*, says Paul, *but tattlers also*; that is, they would sooner carry tales, either with their tongue or pen from the press, for *two-pence* apiece, than buckle to the *spinning wheel*, or be confined to the intolerable employment of *knitting or sewing*; these things make women cut no figure in life; Dorcas's *making garments for the poor*—Hannah's *making little coats for Samuel*—Rachel's *keeping sheep*—and Ruth's *going to glean- ing*, shews the weakness of those honourable women. These sorts of prophetesses have no notion of being the daughters of Sarah, calling the master of the household, Lord. It is true, the real daughters of Sarah even in our day will not be ashamed of their mothers humble conduct;



duct; but as for our prophetesses, falsely so called, they seem to be of the temper of Hagar;—not contented with turning *Sarah out of the chair*, but they spit their venom at the Lord of the household, that he sends servants too big into the vineyard; these women lay by their weakness, and let the world know that they can cope with men—their honour consists in taking a divine by the collar. These had rather be *teachers* than *learners*; chuse to *guide the officers of the household*, rather than their *own house*; to handle the *pen*, rather than the *spindle*; to *usurp authority over the man*, rather than be in *subjection*; to break every positive command of God for a few pence, rather than work to earn it; and to be *commanders in chief*, rather than to be in *silence*.—Hence the apostle calls them *busy bodies*; that is, they neglect all the business that God has set them at, and trouble themselves about the business of others; having discarded the *distaff* and the *spindle*, they take to the *pen* and *tongue*, and live by that, and all in absolute rebellion against God; hence 'tis called *speaking things which they ought not*, 1 Tim. v. 12, 13. The apostle, being sick of these *female teachers*, concludes by ordaining them some employment, in order I suppose to keep them quiet—I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully; for some [of these women] are already turned aside after Satan, 1 Tim. v. 14, 15. Hence we learn that

some preachers used gentleness with these propheteſſes, but this is not the gentleness in my text.

This *gentleness* mentioned in my text is not to be found in *ministers of the letter*, nor yet in *hypocritical professors*; it is a grace peculiar to the regenerate, and is a gift from above, and God will give it to whom he pleases; *but the wisdom that is from above is first pure*—it purifies the heart and judgment, and leads the mind into a pure love of the truth; *then peaceable*—it reveals the way of peace, it proclaims peace to the heart, and makes men earnest in preaching peace, and at *keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*. It is gentle toward the *weaklings* of the flock; gentle toward the *backslider*, or those that *turn aside*; gentle in persecution toward those that *oppose themselves*, or *set themselves to oppose the truth*; and *easy to be intreated*—or easy to those that *intreat*, not slander; full of *mercy and good fruits*—full of the mercy of God, which produces *good fruits* instead of antinomianism; *without partiality*, and *without hypocrisy*, James iii. 17. It teaches no man to be partial in the word of God; it teaches no man to justify a false preacher, nor to slander a true one; it is *without hypocrisy*—it makes a man honest in heart, and sound in the truth; it teaches no man to *condemn the just, nor justify the wicked, for both these are an abomination.* *Prov. 17. 15*

2dly. This *gentleness* is a fruit of the Spirit; but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering,

*suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Gal. v. 22.—* If it be a *fruit* of the *Spirit*, it cannot be found in any but those that are born of the Holy Ghost—who love God—have peace with him—and joy in him; hypocrites may pretend to it, and contend for it, but they know nothing about it.

This grace was, and still is, wonderfully exercised by the Saviour toward his own tried children, especially towards poor humble penitents in soul travail: He shall *feed his flock like a shepherd*: he shall *gather the lambs with his arms*, and *carry them in his bosom*, and shall GENTLY lead those that are with young, Isa. xl. 11. But the Saviour made use of none of this gentleness to Herod the fox; nor to the dogs, when he tells us not to *cast that which is holy* to them; nor to the swine, before whom we are not to *cast our pearls*; nor yet to the *serpents and vipers*, for he was not a gentle shepherd to them; they were not of his sheep; he threatens them with the *damnation of hell*.

The apostle made use of this grace of gentleness, when he acted the part of a nurse to those that were *babes in grace*: *For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile*: For neither at any time used we *flattering words*, as ye know, nor a *cloak of covetousness*; God is witness, nor of men *sought we glory*, nor of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the *apostles of Christ*. But we were GENTLE



among you, even as a nurse cherishest her children,  
1 Theff. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Thus we may see that the Saviour in his character of a *Shepherd* used *gentleness*, but as the lion of the tribe of Judah, he will use his sword. So Paul, in the character of a *nurse* used *gentleness*, but this did not destroy his valour as a soldier; for when those of the *circumcision* called him an *Antinomian*, asserting, that he *made void the law through faith*; and that he said, *let us do evil that good may come*; let us *sin that grace may abound*. Paul lays by his *gentleness* and takes his sword, and tells them that *their damnation is just*. I come now to treat of the *aptness* or *aptitude* of the *Lord's servant* to *teach*, and the *cause* of it; and of the *unaptness* of pretenders to it, and the *reason* why. I chose to handle my heads in this manner because the *word of God* is called a *two edged sword*; and if so, we ought to make it *cut both ways*.

4 This word *apt*, signifies that he has received *gifts* and *grace* to *fit* him for the work; that his *abilities* are suitable to it; and by the constraining power of grace, he is inclined to teach others, and has a quickness or readiness for it, which he is inwardly moved to by the Spirit of God. He knows both law and gospel experimentally; the one fires his zeal, the other draws his love to God; and this fire moves him and constrains him; he knows the *terrors of the Lord*, and *persuades men*; he has felt the *pardon* of his  
own

own sin, and therefore can preach *forgiveness* to others; he is at *peace with God*, and therefore *preaches peace*; he *believes*, and therefore *speaks*; he is *justified* or made *righteous*, and is a *preacher of righteousness*; he has *tasted* that the Lord is *gracious*, and preaches *grace*; he has made his own *calling and election sure*, and so calls others, and preaches *election* to them; God's word has *quickened him*, and he holds *forth the word of life*; the Spirit of the Lord ministers *gifts and grace* to him, and he is a *minister of the Spirit* to others, that they might *partake of his grace*; God has put abundance of grace in his heart, and 'tis out of the *abundance of his heart that his mouth speaks*; God has put the *treasure* into his *earthen vessel*, and he *brings out of his treasure things new and old*; in a word, it is an experimental knowledge of the happy enjoyment of these things that makes the servant of the Lord so *apt, fit, forward, ready, and quick to teach*.

The moving *cause* is God's love to him, and its constraining power in him; *the love of Christ constraineth us*, says Paul, *to suffer all things for the elects sake*, that they may *obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*. The word of God dwelling richly in the heart, makes a man *weary of holding in*; 'tis like a fire, it will blaze out; the spirit is like *new wine*, it will have vent. It is a well of *water springing up*, and will flow over; and men of understanding will draw it

out, and refresh themselves with it. I come now to shew the *unaptness* of graceless pretenders to this work, and the reason why they are so *unapt*.

1st. Because they aim at nothing but the double *honour* that belongs to the office; the *applause* of the people, the *fleece* of the *sheep*, and at a genteel life; they grasp at the ministry to *nurse* their *pride*, and indulge their *laziness*; hence they are called, *beady*, *highminded*, *dumb dogs*, *sleepy dogs* *loving to slumber*, and *greedy dogs that can never have enough*. These men are *apt to dress*, *apt to fleece*, *apt to eat*, and *apt to sleep*; but not *apt to teach*. Because though they may have a *gift*, yet they have not *life*; *they are instruments without life-giving sound*; but God says, *take away the noise of thy viols*—he is not charmed with *violins* or *fiddles*.

The reason of their unaptness is, there is no *springing well* in their hearts, no *oil in the cruse*, no *new wine in the bottle*, no *divine treasure in the earthen vessel*, no *life in the soul*, no *faith in the heart*. Their treasure is at least stole from others, pilfered out of other men's works, and committed to paper; their treasure lays all in their pocket, and how should such be *apt to teach* who have no heart-treasure for it; if the *heart be exercised with covetous practices*, as Peter says, it cannot be exercised with an *aptness* or *fitness to teach*.

Others have got a strong memory, and all that they can hear or borrow they commit to that;



their treasure is laid up in their head; head-knowledge without the *springing well*, is like a pool of standing water, soon stale, and soon dry. Yet with this stock they will at times cut a tolerable figure in a pulpit; and the godly themselves will say the doctrines are sound, the prayer is evangelical, the speech in prayer and in the sermon is *sound speech that cannot be condemned*; but when the preacher is out of the pulpit he is quite another thing; he is no evangelist only when he preaches; hence enquiring souls who go to him when he has done, and make use of some part of his sermon, telling him how it agreed with their experience, can get no satisfactory answer; the sermon was one thing, the conversation is another; this is the man that *wears a garment of linen and woollen together*; he is a *time-server*, a *man-pleaser*, who thirsts for nothing but applause, a genteel appearance, and an idle life; such cannot *preach the faith*, for they have no faith; *how can they believe that receive honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only?* These are not *servants of the Lord*, they *serve their own belly*, and as the love of God is not in them, we cannot suppose that they are *apt to teach*; which leads me,

5 *godly*, To consider the patience of the Lord's servant, and of them that are said to wear it out. 5  
A labourer in the Lord's vineyard has need of patience, for he is called to *bear the burden and heat of the day*; superficial professors will condemn

demn his *plowing*; erroneous men will oppose the *precious seed* that he bears; his *zeal* will be called *rage*; his *fervour*, spleen and bitterness; his attachment to *study*, reservedness; his continuing wherein he is called, singularity; his endeavours to *separate the vile from the precious*, the effects of a party spirit; preaching free grace will be called *Antinomianism*; handling *dark passages*, is enthusiasm; and *refusing confederacy* with them that say a confederacy is the effect of pride; and those that earnestly contend for the faith, have no candour. The servant of the Lord, as a labourer in the vineyard, had need of patience to bear all this, so as not to be discouraged nor frightened from his work by it; *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation that shall come upon all the world to try them.* The Lord's labourer is not to leave his work, because of the opposition that is made against him; he is to continue patiently in his labour, use the *mouth and wisdom that God has given him*, and oppose all that oppose the truth; *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil; and thou hast tried them that say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast born, and hast patience, and for my name sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted,* Rev. ii. 2, 3. Thus we see a man's patience is not to drive him from his labour, nor from trying them that say they are *apostles* or *evangelists*; this is a good work, and is coupled with

with *patience*, and is *approved* by the Lord ; who-  
soever pretends to these offices is to be proved  
a *liar* by the *servants of the Lord*, if he is not.

Nor are we to cease *plowing* and *sowing* as the  
Lord's labourers, on account of the various *winds*  
of *error* ; nor be discouraged at it by feigned pre-  
tenders to candour, nor by the *clouds of false wit-*  
*nesses*. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening*  
*withhold not thine hand*. He that *observeth the wind*  
*shall not sow*, and he that *regardeth the clouds* (of  
false witnesses) *shall not reap*, Eccles. ii. 4.

Those that *sin openly* are to be *rebuked before all*,  
*that others may fear* ; and in this work we are to  
continue, whatever we may suffer in it : *Preach*  
*the word, be instant in season and out of season ; re-*  
*prove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doc-*  
*trine : For the time will come when they will not en-*  
*dure sound doctrine*, 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.

The servant of the Lord has need of *patience*,  
and ought to pray for it, for the good of his own  
soul ; for 'tis *faith that worketh patience* ; and *pa-*  
*tience, experience* ; and *experience, hope* ; and he had  
need of it in exercise daily, that *after he has done*  
*the will of God, he may inherit the blessing* ; which  
will is, to try them that say they are apostles, and  
to prove them liars if they are not ; to separate the  
vile from the precious ; to stop the mouths of gain-  
sayers ; to oppose, and not suffer a woman to teach,  
nor usurp authority over the man ; to oppose errors,  
and the vain janglings of those that desire to be  
teachers



*teachers of the law; to fight against them that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women; and to have nothing to do with those that are heady and highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God: A servant of the Lord is to purge himself from these, that he may be a vessel unto honour, prepared unto every good work.*

The servant of the Lord in his military character, *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, has need of patience; soldiers, in the literal sense, are a very unwelcome guest to many, especially to inn-keepers; every upstart landlady, every bar-maid, and draggle-tailed girl that attends the tap, will flout and hoot at a soldier; and so a good soldier of *Jesus Christ* often finds it. Jezebel kills all that she could, and drives an hundred more into a cave, and then pursued one of the best men that ever lived, namely, *Elijah*; and swears to kill the defence of the nation, even the chariot of *Israel* and the horsemen thereof.

Not only Jezebel destroys them, but *Herodias* counsels her daughter to get the invaluable prize of a prophet's head, as a reward for her dancing; as if nothing but the blood of one of the greatest prophets that ever was born of woman could pay the demands of a dancing-miss; thus have the good soldiers of *Jesus Christ* suffered by old wives, barlots, and dancing girls.

Moses, who was faithful in all God's house, had no small trouble from this quarter: We read of  
*Miriam's*

*Miriam's taking a timbrel in her hand, and going before the women, and leading on the musick and the dancing, and ordering her female attendance to sing to the Lord, because he had triumphed gloriously, Exod. xv. 20, 21. but soon after she opposes Moses, and wants to be a mediator and a law-giver; and Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses; Miriam first, and Aaron afterwards; she had engaged the high priest in her conspiracy: And they said, hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? and the Lord heard it, Num. xii. 1, 2. Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, Num. xii. 3. yet his meekness or candour did not skreen him from the scourge of women's tongues. Therefore God comes down to stop this rebellious female teacher: And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation; and he called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth, Num. xii. 4, 5. and he said, hear now my words; if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses, Num. xii. 7, 8. and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed; and the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold Miriam became leprous, white as snow. And Aaron*  
said

said unto *Moses*, *Alas, my Lord, I beseech thee*, lay not the *sin* upon us wherein we have done *foolishly*, and wherein we have *sinned*; let her not be as *one dead*, Num. xii. 10, 11, 12. And *Moses* (who was not destitute of *candour*) *cried unto the Lord, saying, heal her now, O God I beseech thee*; and the *Lord said unto Moses*, if her father had *spit in her face*, should she not be *ashamed seven days*; how much more for spitting in the face of her Maker, and rebelling against the prophet and mediator that God had appointed?—*Let her be shut out of the camp seven days*, Num. xii. 12, 13, 14.

*Miriam* was not like *Deborah* the prophetess; when she had received a message from the Lord, she tells *Barak* of it privately, after she had sent and called him; and when *Barak* declared that he would not go unless she went with him, she rebukes him, and tells him if he wants a woman's aid to defend him, a woman shall take the glory of the victory from him: *And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go: And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman*, Judges iv. 8, 9. Here is a woman that is called a prophetess; one to whom a message from heaven came; yet she did not turn her divine message into a *twopenny squib*, in order to *fire it off* against the *Lord's ministers* at the door of the synagogues when the people were going to *worship*.



*worship.* She received her message from God to Barak, and to him she delivered it; and when he called for her help, she predicted the loss of his honour.

And this I will be bold to affirm, that if I have written falsehood—if I am in errors—if my doctrine makes void the law—if I be an Antinomian, and influenced by a bad or by a party spirit—if I am of a blood-thirsty disposition—if influenced with rancour, spleen, and bitterness—if destitute of meekness and candour, and *too big by one-half*—then it may be depended upon that the conduct of the present combination has been consistent with the will of God; and that our present *prophets*, who has made so free with me, my office, my doctrines, and my stature, in my pretensions to excell, has done right; and that God will shew his approbation, and bear his comfortable testimony to them, and incline his saints to justify his proceeding in and by them all. But if, on the other hand, I am a child of his, and am called by him to the ministry, and am doing his work instead of deceiving the people or dividing them by a bad spirit of spleen and bitterness, then I say *God shall shew me a token for good, and that others that hate me shall see it*; and those of the combination who have slandered me, reproached me, and injured me, together with the present *prophets* that has made so free with my ministry, shall sensibly meet with the visible disapprobation of God; and it shall be made known in as plain a manner as the approbation of God to Abel

was before Cain. I shall pawn my honour in the ministry upon this, and the present generation shall bear witness to it; and I will leave God to justify his own conduct with respect to sending out such bad spirited men as me, and to vindicate me if I am his servant.

I wish every true Israelite to observe what this enthusiastic *Micaiah* faith, and watch the event. If I am the Lord's servant, these *weapons of women* shall not prosper against me; but if I am not they certainly shall. *Zeresh* herself, the wife of Haman, though the *daughter of the devil*, could never predict success even to her own husband against the *seed of the Jews*, Est. vi. 13. and God has declared that no weapon formed against his servants shall prosper; and I believe he speaks as he means. What I have asserted I found on the testimony of his own word, and upon the testimony that I think he has given me—testifying my adoption, and my call to the ministry, which I shall submit to his will to own or disown according to his faithfulness and truth.

Thus we see that the servants of the Lord, both as *labourers in the vineyard* and as *good soldiers of Jesus Christ*, have need of patience, and that in many respects. 'Tis in *patience* that we are to possess our souls; and this grace is coupled with *faith*, and is to be found in none but real believers; hence it is called the *patience and faith of the saints*. We see that all sorts of people will try  
this

this grace more or less; not only persecutors, devils, and ungodly men, but *little children*, as Elisha found it, and *old women* also.

I have received letters from all sorts of people, women and all; some have informed me that they have been intolerably prejudiced against me, and desired me to call upon them to remove it, which I did not see to be a part of my duty as a minister; for people that live in idleness can attend upon me better than I can upon them; especially women destitute of grace, who rather *command* than *intreat*. I own Wisdom is gentle to them that *intreat*, but not to women that *command*. I did not get at my ministry so easy, and therefore dare not make it too cheap: *Let them return unto thee*, says God, *but return thou not unto them*, Jer. xv. 19.

I received another long epistle from a woman after the above, which I must confess was pregnant with a deal of warm zeal; and 'twas sent by one who it seems is a staunch advocate for a certain evangelist; I opened it just before I went into the pulpit; but as I found no *candour* in it, I carried it into the vestry, and delivered it into the hands of Mr. BRAYNE, and desired that it might be read to the Deacons, which it accordingly was; and I was glad that they read it; for at the conclusion it savoured too much of spleen and bitterness, for she plainly "d——d me for a rascal for writing against so good a man." I do not pretend to say that this woman is not a *pro-*

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*phetess,*



*phetefs*, for I believe she is, and one of the same stamp that bear *that name* in the 13th chapter of Ezekiel's prophesy; and such as the apostle Paul was troubled with in his days; yet I must do her justice; for although she was found out upon the enquiry of the Deacons to be a common prostitute on the town, yet she did not print her letter and send it after me from one place of worship to another; she had modesty enough to *seal it up* and direct it to me as a private rebuke, which was well taken, because she did not seem to wish to hurt the cause of God on my account, nor to act the part of a devil at the chapel door; that is, she did not order an outcry to be made at the *door of the congregation* when the people were going out, as the devil is said to do, who comes in the character of *the wicked one*, to *steal away the seed that is sown in people's hearts*, in order to make them unfruitful to God. In this she shewed some symptoms of fear and reverence, and some regard for the cause of God, though she thought it her duty to lay a *private lash* upon me. By these things it may be seen that a *labourer in the Lord's vineyard*, and a *good soldier of Jesus Christ*, had need of *patience*.

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I come now to treat of the *meekness* mentioned in my text, and wherein it differs from that which is common to *flesh and blood*, which produces what is commonly called *candour*, which is so much admired by hypocrites.

This

This *meekness* is a grace that is never to be found in any but regenerate people, though something like it may at times be seen in an alarmed sinner, or in a discovered hypocrite, which has deceived thousands of gracious souls, whose natural passions have been moved at their trouble, as Samuel was at the calamity of Saul, for which God rebuked him; yet this meekness that I have to treat of has not *corrupt nature* for its soil; the embalmed hypocrite may counterfeit it, but never can produce it; the person that is a stranger to real conversion, and to the operations of the Holy Ghost, has nothing of this invaluable grace; it is one of *Zion's ornaments*; an hypocrite may counterfeit it, as a whore does the dignity of a wife, who feigns to be the lady of a nobleman, or as a concubine puts on the *diadem of a queen*; who has just as much right to it as Satan had to his dignity when he told the Saviour that the *kingdoms of this world were his*, and to *whom he would he gave them*; but he could never make his title good.

*Spiritual meekness* is an ornament that God *puts* upon a *regenerated* and *renewed* soul, and has its existence in that which is called the *new*, or *bidden man*: *Let your adorning be the bidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Peter iii. 4.* Here we learn that *spiritual meekness* exists in that which is incorruptible, namely, in the Holy Ghost, and

is a fruit of him—the fruit of the Spirit is meekness, Gal. v. 23. It is the compassionate bowels of the *new or bidden man of the heart*; and as it is a fruit of God's Spirit, it is in *his sight of great price*.

This softening humbling grace attends and assists the faith of a real believer in his attending on the preached word, when he is enabled to *mix faith with it*. Spiritual meekness softens the soil of the believing heart, and gives the word a *deepness of earth* to strike root in, and *moistens* it that he may not fall away for the *want of root*, Matt. xiii. 6. nor *wither for the want of moisture*, Luke viii. 6. This softening grace makes way for the word of God to *gender or ingraft* itself under the operations of the Spirit, to every faculty of the heaven-born soul; insomuch that the word becomes an *incorruptible seed* in the believer, that *lives and abides for ever*, and assures him of salvation. Hence the believer is said to *receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save his soul*, James i. 21. Without this fruit of the Holy Ghost there is no *feeding on the word*—there is no digesting nor concocting; a man may fill his head with notions, but not his soul with good: *The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him*, Psalm xxii. 26.

I shall now shew how this *meekness* is produced. We find it is to be found in none but regenerate men; this meekness is in the *bidden man*, and the residence



residence of this hidden man is the heart; hence he is called *the bidden man of the heart*; but the sinner's heart must be *broken*, and thrown open too, before this *new man* can come in to hide himself, so as to become a *bidden man* there. A stony-hearted sinner can give this new man no residence; the stone must be removed from the well's mouth—sin purged—an heart of flesh given—and a new spirit be received—self be debased and abhorred, and God discovered as pacified toward us, before this *meekness* will appear. God's word is a *hammer* to *break this rock*, especially when accompanied with the thundering voice of God in his law, which pierces the deepest recesses of the soul, and makes *inquisition for blood*—demands perfect obedience on peril of damnation—carries the scrutiny with all imaginable rigour—strikes the sinner dumb at the dreadful tribunal, until he is sinking between a double sentence, namely, that of a *broken law* and an *honest conscience*, until the sting of death and wrath of God acquaint him with the snares of death and pains of hell, which give him a foretaste of what he justly deserves. This man is *fore broken in the place of dragons*, and *covered with the shadow of death*, and knows the terrors of the Lord; yet all this will not produce meekness.

Such a sinner will be drowned in tears, filled with self-pity and universal candour; his deport and countenance will discover a deal of humility; he will cry out against sin, and his words

will be smoother than oil; but in heart he *frets against the Lord*—he curses the day of his birth—blames his Maker for bringing him into existence—wishes there was no God to punish him—fain would fly out of his hand—or, like the devil himself, he would be glad to *ascend above the height of the clouds, and be equal to the Most High*, while he is sensibly sinking into *hell to the sides of the pit*, Isa. xiv. 14, 15. But when the Holy Ghost opens the heart, and lets a divine ray into it, there is an *healing balm* that attends this *wing or beam of the Sun of Righteousness*; the understanding receives the *unction or eye salve*; and, beginning to see, the poor sinner pursues the beam up to the blessed face from whence it came, and discovers something of the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. This unction dispels the vail from the understanding, influences the mind, and conveys to the heart the pleasing tidings of a *door of hope* being discovered; while the heart appears wide open, broken with desires, pouring out petition after petition, backed with ten thousand wishes, longings, sighings, and groanings, that the *object of hope* who has *shewed himself through the lattice*, will but *come into the garden*, where he is to meet with the kindest reception and the best entertainment that can be prepared by a lost, ruined, self-loathed and self-condemned sinner.

At length the Lord descends on his own *beam*, and tells the sinner that he *has overcome him*,  
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and appears the *author of faith*, and dwells in the *heart* by it; where the sinner finds such an entertainment as none know but God and himself; now he feeds on the *bidden manna*; sings a song, that none can learn but the redeemed; the new name of a *son of God* by adoption is written on him; the white stone, that *witnesses* his sonship, is received; he is established in hope like a pillar; and the *name of God* is written in legible characters on him, and appears as conspicuous to others as, *Holiness to the Lord*, did on the *high priests mitre*. Now he arises and shines, for his light is come, and the glory of God is risen on him; this man knows what *spiritual meekness* is; Christ crucified, and his broken spirit have had a meeting; he knows something of the *meek and lowly Jesus* experimentally; but those that are strangers to all these things, have no more of this meekness about them than those that Christ calls *weepers and wailers* in hell. Such a soul as this cannot give an account of the goodness of God to him without being sensibly and deeply affected: *He will sanctify the Lord in his heart, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear, 1 Peter iii. 15.*

But the hypocrite goes another way to work; he calls for *meekness* and *candour*; and if you ask him *a reason of the hope that is in him*, he waves the subject, being conscious that 'tis *experience*



*that worketh hope*; and knowing he has no experience, he is afraid of his hypocrisy being discovered; for if his false hope be taken away, his countenance, profession, and reputation, all fall together. These call for meekness, but not for a reason of our hope; *meekness without hope*, is like the *full assurance of faith* without a *spiritual birth*; one contends for the *bowels*, and the other for the *feet of the new man*; yet can give us no reason of this *bidden man of the heart*, or of Christ in them the *hope of glory*. They have yielded up the palace by a profession, but they cannot tell us, whether the *strong man armed keeps it*, or he that is *mighty to save*; but I suppose the former, because Christ says, *he keeps it in peace*; and if so, he chuses not to be disturbed with a perpetual outcry about power of religion, but to be rocked to sleep with gentleness and candour. These serve us as *Talkative* served *Bunyan's Christian*; he was all knowledge and candour, until Christian began at his heart; then, says John, *like the moon into the wain he goes*, and so will all but he that heart work knows: This is a truth John, and I can set my seal to it, for I have seen it verified in numbers of professors. John tells us, he knew nothing of the *burden falling from his back at the cross*; he had met with no difficulties at the *wicket gate*; he was a stranger to those things that make the *gate so streight*, at the head of the path of *regeneration*. John says, he came in of himself, and he will go out of himself, which is another truth. This

meekness, that I have described, lays in the hidden man; is a fruit of the blessed Spirit of God, which makes the new-born soul behave itself before God as a *weaned child*; nothing afflicts it so much as the loss of the *breasts of consolation*, after which it will pine like the dove, until the sounding of God's bowels is felt again towards the believer. A clear discernment of the depravity of nature, and the desperate evil of sin, together with the long suffering, mercy, and immutable love of God in Christ Jesus, will perpetually draw forth in private before God these bowels of spiritual meekness in a believer. Moses found grace in God's sight, and dwelt perpetually in his favour, and none so meek; but this did not destroy his faithfulness; he was zealous for his God, and faithful in his house. But nothing of this is to be found in unregenerate men; they may be quiet and shew something like it, but there is a woe to them that are at ease in Zion; sinners at ease are not troubled like other men, nor plagued like them; they can talk about the meek and lowly Jesus, and well they may; for he has never *met them as a bear bereft of her whelps, nor rent the caul of their hearts*, Hosea xiii. 8. therefore they feel no plague, fear no wrath, nor see any danger; they are alive (to sin) without the law, and dead (to God) being without the power of the gospel; strangers to divine inspiration, and to divine instruction; hence they always run counter to the spiri-

spiritual man's judgment, both in preaching and conversing; nor can they ever touch upon, or run parallel with, the tender feelings, or keen sensations, of a quickened and new-born soul. I have given you a description of the meekness of the Lord's servant, and how he came by it, together with the manner how he receives the law, and the gospel also. This man knows by experience, the righteous attributes of God; he knows the *righteousness of the law*, and the *blessedness of an imputed one*; and to such souls as these God speaks, and for their attention he calls. *Hearken unto me, my PEOPLE, and give ear unto me, O my NATION; for a LAW shall proceed from ME (not from old women) and I will make my judgment to rest for a LIGHT of the people. My RIGHTEOUSNESS is near, my SALVATION is gone forth, and MINE ARM shall judge the people; and the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Hearken unto me ye that KNOW RIGHTEOUSNESS; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings; for the moth shall eat them like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation, Isai. li. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.*

Reader, whenever thou hearest a man talk about the law being the only rule of a believer's life, ask him, how he came by the law, and whether it proceeded from God to him? How it operated on his heart? What it discovered within



and without him? What his sensations were, under the operation? What occasion or advantage sin took by its rigorous demands? What it wrought in him, love or hatred? Whether it did bring him as a *schoolmaster to Christ*, or whether it drove him from him, revealing forbidding wrath, instead of attracting love and mercy? and whether he did not fly before it in his soul, as far as the very gates of hell would let him go, instead of coming by it to Christ? or to speak in scripture language, whether he did not find an *hatred to the light*, and sculk from it rather than approach it, seeing it reproved him for his sinful deeds; and try all that he says, not only by thy judgment, but by the powerful and lively oracles of thine own conscience; for the believer has both law and gospel there, and if he cannot touch thy feelings have nothing to do with him; he has not got the law, 'tis not written on his heart, he knows nothing of righteousness, he has not *passed under the rod*, nor is he *brought into the bond of the covenant*. Pay no regard to the *speech of them that are puffed up*, but inquire and feel after the *power*; the *kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*. Saints are to *speak of the glory of God's kingdom*, and to *talk of the power*; they are to make known to the sons of men the *mighty acts* (that have passed on their souls) and the *glorious majesty* of the kingdom, when Christ sets it up in their hearts. If they are strangers to these things, they are the subjects of Satan; he reigns under  
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their veil, never was discovered by the light of God, nor cast out by his power; under a mask of religion, under the veil of ignorance, and in the centre of an impenitent heart, the prince of darkness reigns, rules, and triumphs. Is my reader a believer in Christ? if he is, I tell him the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Was it words of candour that laid affliction on thy loins at first, and kept thee impending on the brink of hell, or was it *power*? Was it the cant of hypocrites that brought thee up out of the horrible pit, or was it *power*? Was it empty words that wrought faith in thee, or was it the arm of God revealed, that *worked in thee the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power*? How hast thou been delivered in *six troubles*, and escaped the *seventh*? Was it the empty sound of carnal professors, or was it the right *hand of God's power*, that upheld thee and brought thee through? Has it not been the mighty *power* of God that has given thee spiritual *might in the inner man*? that has appeared the most conspicuous in thy weakness, and that has often appeared when a temptation has discovered itself, and thy deceitful heart has already given in to it, and the death brought forth by sin conceiving has been felt in thy conscience. I ask, if it was the doctrines of the law that appeared and kept thee, and delivered thee, or the *power of God*? and whether by *word* thou art kept through faith to salvation, or by the *power of God*? and lastly, whether

whether the word *candour* will prop thee up in a dying hour, or God who is the *strength* of his people's *heart* and their *portion* for ever? If thou sayest all this is right, then I ask, Art thou now staggering between the omnipotent arm of the Saviour and the cant of old women, who walk in craftiness, and by *idleness deny the faith*, and are worse than infidels; and all for the sake of a few pence, or a morsel of bread. Thou art not to receive the law from old women; they are to *teach younger women to be sober, to guide the house, love their husbands and their children*; this is their sphere; out of this, they are out of character, and put the *church of God to shame*; it is a *shame for women to speak in the church*; came the word of God to them, or came it out from them only, 1 Cor. xiv. 35, 36. God tells thee, that a *law shall proceed from him*; *Receive the law, I pray thee from God's mouth, and lay his words in thine heart*, Job xxii. 22. thy faith is not to stand in *old wives fables*, nor in *human wisdom*, but in the *power of God*. It was Mr. Worldly-wise-man that sent Christian to Mr. Legality to get rid of his burden, till Sinai was ready to fall on his head; and others who have been directed by Evangelist, have forsook his council, and gone to Sinai for rules, till they have brought a fresh burden on their souls, and an old yoke on their necks, conceived fresh enmity in their minds, and have not spared to spit their venom at the grace of God; this shews what wrath the law works, and what bondage it genders; such  
preachers



preachers can only prejudice, plunder, insnare, and strip thee; when God will use others, to *settle, comfort, support, and succour* thee; these latter are they *that he makes manifest in thy conscience*, whether thou knowest it or not, 2 Cor. v. 11. and such, agreeable to thine own heart's experience, thou wilt be glad *to live and die with*. This divine manifestation brings about the divine cement or bond of union which the carnal professor cannot get at, for savoury souls will smell them out, though they labour hard to deceive them. I come with one more appeal to conscience, which is, whether this doctrine of the law being the only and all-sufficient rule of life, was the doctrine in whole or in part that God applied to thee, when thou escaped the damnation of hell at first; or whether it was any thing like it; if you say, No, nothing bore me up, nor brought me out of the regions of the shadow of death, but that experimental preaching that set forth Christ as all in all; very well, the kingdom stands in the same power still, and on that same *shoulder* whereon, as a *lost sheep, thou wast laid at first, and brought into the fold*; as you *received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*. He has appeared the *author*, believe in him as the carrier on, and hope in him as the *finisher of faith*; and thou shalt have *hope* in thy death, nor shall thine *expectations be cut off*. Let others contend for legal rules, *run thou the race set before thee, looking to Jesus; walk in him, and in union with him; he has promised to keep*

keep that man in *perfect peace* whose *mind* is stayed on him, and continue thou so to do to the very last, for they, and only they, are *blessed*, that *die in the Lord*; that is, in *confidence* in him, in *view* of him, and in *union* with him: As the Lord God of hosts liveth, this must be thy confidence and thine hope at last, if thy dying head finds any support; therefore, recline on this arm in thy life, which alone can support thee, when heart and flesh fail. The law, or the doctrines of it, will afford thee but little comfort in a dying hour. *Footmen* who never get into the chariot of love, have sometimes set thee a running a wrong road and *wearied thee*; and if thou hast been often *wearied* of the warfare in a *land of peace*, how wouldest thou *smite the waters with such a mantle* at the *swellings of Jordan*, Jer. xii. 5. Surely Israel did not enter into that land of Canaan for their righteousness sake, nor for their obedience to the rule of the law; 'tis called the land of promise; God gave it to Abraham by promise, and God brought them in, and by an high hand drove he the Canaanites out. I have *written thus that you might have somewhat to answer them that glory in appearance, but not in heart*. Let these men and women who call for meekness and candour give us a better account than this of it, that we may know what it is, and where they got it; whether it is from heaven, or of men; whether from grace, or from themselves, and whether they mean the *thing*, or the name only. 'Tis true, men may cull  
scripture,

scripture, and write something like it, who never *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, yet the wise will find them out; for if they borrow, or steal the words, yet, the *broad seal of God* is wanting; therefore their attempts make no impression, nor can they be received as a part of the *mystical body*, which (by the Spirit) is to be *fittly joined together*; for before they can be a part of this *connected body*, they must have an *unction*; without this *joint oil*, there can be no *union*; the *body is compacted* by that which every joint supplieth, according to the *effectual working in every part*, making *increase*, Eph. iv. 16. But, alas, a noise about candour produces no *joint oil*; these pretended members have no *effectual working in them*; they have got no *hold of the head*, and consequently cannot be spiritually *joined to the body*, nor afford any *increase* to it. I come now to shew, that this meekness does not destroy the zeal nor the faithfulness of the Lord's servants.

Of all the children of men *Moses* is reported to be the *meekest man*; and no wonder, when God had so clearly revealed himself to him, telling him, that he had *found grace in his sight*, and that he *knew him by name*, and that he would be with him. *Moses* had seen God's providential care over him, and his people, the dreadful severity of God to the Egyptians, and the deliverance he wrought for Israel; the destruction of the one, and the salvation of the other. He had *received the law*, and quaked and trembled at the promulgation



mulgation of it, therefore he knew the terrors of God; and on the other hand, God had revealed himself to him as his God in covenant; he had *proclaimed his name* before him, and *communed* with him *mouth to mouth*. He dwelt perpetually under the cloud of divine favour, and was led by the *pillar* of eternal love for forty years together. and had seen God *rise up* at his *request*, and *return* at his *desire*; and had been kept perpetually *crippled in spirit* by a *stiffnecked people*, who had so grieved his spirit that he spake *unadvisedly* with his lips; nay, it went *ill* with Moses for their sakes. The *princes*, yea almost the whole congregation, besides the *company of Corah*, had at times opposed him; Aaron his brother, *Miriam* his own *sister* in the flesh and in the spirit, had at times added to his burthen, and tried the meekness of this good soldier, which was enough to keep him meek and humble with a witness; but this did not root out his zeal for God. As a good soldier Moses was still God's honourable servant, and faithful in all his house; he was not afraid, at his farewell sermon, to tell them, that he had lead them *forty years in that wilderness*, and yet God had not given them *eyes* to see, *ears* to hear, nor *hearts* to understand. He rebuked them for their rebellion against the Lord, and called them *foolish and unwise*, for their base requiting, forsaking him, and lightly esteeming the rock of their salvation; for which he tells

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them,

them, *their feet should slip in due time* and their *calamities* should make *haste*; that God would provoke them to jealousy with a foolish nation, as they had provoked him to anger with that which was not God, that he would heap mischiefs upon them for their folly, and spend his arrows upon them in his wrath, Deut. xxxii. 23. Having treated of the meekness of God's servant, and from whence it arises, and that it doth not destroy zeal for God, nor faithfulness in his work; I come now to treat of the *meekness* which is common to flesh and blood, that produces the candour of hypocrites that is so highly esteemed.

I have known some that have sat under the word of God for years, and frequently drowned in tears; I have observed it, and when I came to be in company with them, I heard of nothing but the success they had formerly in business, and the various methods they used in order to accumulate their independency; they seemed as ignorant of the plan of salvation, and as destitute of the power of religion, as those that never heard a sermon or read a bible. *I received a little instruction from this*, and by observation I found, that the subjects that mostly affected them, were those that were levelled at the sin of *covetousness*, which described the awful end of a man that has his portion in this life, the impossibility of the love of God dwelling in a heart that *loves this world or the things of it*, and that if the salvation of God was applied

applied to such souls as it was to the *heart of Zaccheus*, the *root of all evil* would lose its soil, the grace of God would give covetousness no ground to root in. We know the *rich man's wealth is his strong city*, and as an *high wall in his own conceit*; but this wall can stand no firmer before the everlasting love of God, when applied, than the *walls of Jericho* could before the *blasts of the rams horns*. Treating of these things has stirred up the *meekness* of the above described misers; they have heard it with many *tears*, and like the young man in the gospel, they have gone away sorrowful because they had *great possessions*; this is the *sorrow of the world that worketh death*.

2dly. I have known *women of the town* who have sined with so high an hand that their consciences have been like a nest of vipers, who have run for *refuge* to hear the *gospel*, and if unclean persons have been cut at in the discourse, and the *visible mark* that God has set on a whore's *forehead*, Jere. iii. 3. has been described, together with her *attire*, her *wanton gait*, her *nets and snares* with which she *entangles her prey*, the wrath of God that she *incurs by increasing transgressors* among men, together with the certainty of God's *judging whoremongers and adulterers*, and their *woeful end* if grace prevent not; these things have set such characters to weeping and wailing; they have discovered much meekness, but never left



off their old trade; they never cried to God with their hearts, though they have wept in a chapel and howled upon their beds, Hosea vii. 14. This meekness is like Ephraim's goodness, compared to early dew, which vanishes before the sun, but is nothing like that which is called a fruit of the Spirit, which Mary Magdalen had when she poured out her soul at the Saviour's feet, and obtained the pardon of her sin and a sense of the love of God in her heart; she vomited up her folly at the Saviour's feet, and left it for good and all; but these, after all their crying and howling, act according to the proverb; *As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool like these returneth to his folly*, Prov. xxvi. 11.

3dly. An empty graceless professor, who has heard the gospel till his brutal enmity against the preachers and professors of it has been slain; who has been tamed and become tractable, and on the account of this and its being attended with the use of the tongue and an outward reformation, he has been received into the church; and if the ministry has been rather superficial he has become one of the greatest note in it; but when heresies have crept in, to make manifest who are the Lord's and who not, he is the man that is generally caught in the net; and this column, in appearance, has been a stumbling block to many of the poor weaklings, who have thought him more than man.

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Sometimes God discovers him by *removing* the old *pastor* and bringing in one more acquainted with *heart work*, in order to separate the *vile* from the *precious*; this is a ministry that his soul hates, because it lays him open; he becomes the greatest opposer of it; but if God's hand is with the servant, and he comes in to be the pastor in the face of all opposition, this opposer sets no bounds to his rage, he discovers himself daily in the eyes of others what he really is, and conceives such an implacable enmity against both the minister and his ministry as *slays the silly one*. He will at times seem to shed tears on the account of his sinking reputation, when he gets with those who condole him in his degraded point of light, when with shame he takes the lowest room. This *meekness* and *candour* was found in *Saul*, when in the like circumstances; *Then came up the Zephites to Saul to Gibeab, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us. Now therefore, O King, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down, and we will deliver him into thine hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the Lord for ye have compassion on me, 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20, 21.* but all this *meekness* and *candour* sprang from *malice* against *David*, because *God* was with him; it had no other root than *murder*; he that *hateth his brother without a cause* is a *murderer*; he that *hateth* a believer in *Christ* *hateth Christ*. This *meekness* appeared in *Esau* when he sought the *blessing* carefully with *tears*; he lift up his *voice* and *wept*, and said, *Bless me,*

me, even *me* O my father, and after he had wept he received comfort; for 'tis said, that *Esau comforted himself, purposing after the death of his father to kill his brother Jacob*, Gen. xxvii. 42. and if he had done that, he had but *one more blow to strike* in order to *extirpate* the whole church of God, and that was to *kill* his mother *Rebeccah*, and then the *fraternity* of heaven had been *extinct*, and *Esau* had been more renowned than *Cain*, who killed the *third part* of the world at *one blow*.

Self, self-pity, self-seeking, and self-applause, is the only *root* of all this feigned meekness; 'tis a *fruit* of fallen nature; like loves its like; sinners love sinners; it favours not the things that be of *God*, but those that be of *men*; to fallen nature it is candid, especially to discovered *hypocrites*, to desperate *rebels*, and to *apostates*; to these it shews much *candour*, it is *gentle*, it calls for *meekness*; but its enmity against the experimental preachers of Christ, or the spiritual children of God, is such, as breaks through all bounds of God and man, of decency and modesty, and would venture on the *bosses* of God's *buckler*, and expose the whole cause of God to contempt, and their own souls to every curse in the Bible, in order to seek *revenge* on a *minister of the Spirit*. The report of *power* attending the word, and of sinners being called by it, is what they cannot endure: *From the time that it goeth forth it takes them; for morning by morning it passes over them; yea by day and by night; and it is a vexation to them only to understand the report of it,*

Isaiah



Isaiah xxviii. 19. And as it was then by professing Israel, so it is now by hypocritical professors; they cannot endure the *power* of religion to be enforced.

Not long ago I had a *two-penny pamphlet* on CANDOUR addressed to me, and sold at my chapel doors, which I did not much wonder at; as I know hypocrites cannot love the saints, nor can the *righteous nation that keep the truth* find much love to them. Besides, there had been a *penny address* sent to me in print some time before, throughout the whole of which the author contradicted and condemned himself; which I did not wonder at, when I perceived it to be the work of a poor Arminian, who had nothing in his head but wind and confusion; a friend desired me to answer it, but I told him "it was written by some poor faithless *free-will monger*, who being destitute of the grace of God could not trust his Maker for a loaf; and if he could get a bit of bread for his poor children by an *Address to Mr. Huntington*, he was very welcome; I was willing to live and let live;" which I am informed he did; for it was reported to me, that he cleared *fourteen pounds* by it, which might help to pay his rent, if he was not too far gone with his landlord.

But this last *two-penny pamphlet* on CANDOUR, which was first sent out *without* a name, seemed to cause great *triumphs in Gath*; the *Philistines* shouted, supposing that *Samson* was bound by a

woman; and to be sure, when I heard that it was written by a female, I was surprised at her *brazen brow*, especially when I was informed it was done by a woman that *professes religion*,—a woman that is a *member of a church*,—a woman that gospel ministers countenance and visit; I never was more surprised; and must confess it was such a piece of infernal presumption, such contempt of God, such rebellion against his command, and such *daring insolence*, as I never read nor heard of as coming from *any of the weaker sex* since I have been in the world.

I turned my thoughts to all the *honourable women* mentioned in scripture, to their *writings*, and to their *conduct*; I considered the lesson that Bathsheba taught her son Solomon, and of the council she gave him, together with the description she gives of a *virtuous woman*; *who seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; that she layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff; that she is not afraid of the snow, for her household are clothed with scarlet; that she maketh fine linen and selleth it; that she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness*, Prov. chap. 31. This prophecy I admire; and as Solomon was the *son of her womb*, and the *son of her vows*, she acted the mother's part in endeavouring to instruct him, and took her part of the burthen, as all mothers ought to do, instead of laying the whole weight upon the father; but when Solomon came to the throne,

throne, the dignity of the mother did not devour the obedience of a subject; she laid by her power to command, and took a petition, *I desire one small PETITION of thee, I pray thee say me not nay*, 1 Kings ii. 20.

I considered the conduct of the *virgin mother*, who at the *marriage in Cana in Galilee*, when the mother of Jesus said unto him, *They have no wine*; and of the rebuke she got for limiting the power of God, *Woman what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not come*, John ii. 2—4. I considered the *reproofs* she gave him at his first public appearance, when she said unto him, *Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?* Luke ii. 48, 49. I perused the conduct of *Deborah*, that pious prophetess in Israel, who, upon the delivery of her divine message to *Barak*, refused to go without her; who declared to him that a *woman* should take the honour of the victory; yet she did not bring against him a railing accusation. She joined with *Barak* in the song, instead of publishing a two-penny ballad against him; *Then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord for avenging of Israel*, Judges v. 1, 2.—*Awake, awake Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song: Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam*, verse 12.



There is no *two-penny squib* in all this song fired off against *Barak*, though he shewed such unbecoming cowardice. It is true, she did not write with that meekness and candour that hypocrites call for in our days. *Curse ye Meroz*, says Deborah; but this rancour must be overlooked, seeing *the Angel of the Lord said, Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty*, Judges v. 23. If they are cursed who come not to help, they are not likely to be blessed who hatch mischief in the chimney corner, on purpose to hinder the Lord's helpers against the mighty.

I have considered the conduct of *Abigail* toward David, when he and his men were equipped and armed to destroy her whole house; which certainly favoured of a little *spleen and bitterness*; but she did not throw it in his teeth, nor tell him that he was too big by one-half, but fell at his feet, and said, *Upon me, my Lord, upon me let this iniquity be, and let thine handmaid I pray thee speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my Lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but thine handmaid saw not the young men whom thou didst send. Now therefore my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand; now let*

*let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid; for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days: Yet a man is risen up to pursue thee and seek thy soul, but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life, 1 Sam. xxv. 24—28.*

This woman does not accuse him of any rancour, spleen, or bitterness; she brings no railing accusation against the man after God's own heart; she complains not of his being too big; she gives no rules to him to go by, nor limits the divine power that was with him by prescribing to the Holy Ghost that came on him after Samuel had anointed him. She enforces the promise, predicts his salvation and the destruction of his enemies, and desires to be remembered by him when it would be well with him.

I have considered the song of *Hannah*, who suffered so long (on the account of her barrenness) under *Peninah*, who is said to be her adversary, who provoked her sore to make her fret because that the Lord had shut up her womb; and this she did year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat, 1 Sam. i. 6, 7. Nor did the conduct of *Eli*, who charged her with drunkenness, divest her of that modesty and candour that becomes women professing godliness; she never mentions a word against her husband *Elkanah*,  
who

who I think dealt very unkindly and untenderly with her; she only acknowledged that by *strength no man could prevail* over the womb or any thing else. Nor does she bring one slander against the priest, who had innocently brought a false charge against her, who was one of the best of women; which must be very provoking to one of a broken heart, influenced by the Holy Ghost, finished and shattered by the repeated insults of an hypocrite, who had been her *rival* in the bed as well as her *adversary* in religion; for tis said *she made her fret, because the Lord's hand had gone out against her in shutting her womb*. But Hannah brings no charge in a *two-penny pamphlet* against either the priest or the husband; she speaks of the providence of God, of the salvation of the saints, and of the destruction of hypocrites: *He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall be thunder upon them*, 1 Sam. ii. 9, 10.

I have considered all the good prophetesses of the old and new testament, together with all them that are called *faithful* or *honourable women* in Paul's days, who had lodged strangers—brought up children—washed the saints feet—laboured with Paul and helped him—who carried his messages or epistles—who served the churches—who were to be received, relieved, and brought on their ways by the members of the same, or to be conducted  
safe



safe over the difficult or dangerous parts of their road, so that *nothing was to be lacking to them*; but not one of all these women, who were called *faithful* or *honourable*, ever wrote a word against a penitent sinner or a believer, much less against a minister of Christ Jesus.

I have considered the *false prophetesses* against whom Ezekiel was commanded to *prophecy*, Ezek. xiii. 17. who were to be rebuked, and against whom God pronounces his woe: *Wo to the women that sow pillows under all arm-holes, and make kerchiefs upon the head,* verse 18. These were 'accused of polluting God's name among his people for handfulls of barley, and for pieces of bread, rather than work; wherefore, saith God, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye hunt souls to make them flee from the truth. I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go; your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand; because with lies ye have made the righteous sad whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the bands of the wicked, Ezek. xiii. 20—22. But I cannot find that one of these ever wrote against a servant or prophet of the Lord.

Even the *witch of Endor*, though she was a pimp for the devil in private, yet had modesty enough to conceal her friend, and her private converse with him, until the king of Israel disguised himself, and went to her with a petition, and an oath of God in his mouth, swearing unto her, as the Lord liveth there shall no punishment happen unto thee  
for

for this thing, 1 Sam. xxviii. 10. This woman's wickedness was exceeding great; she is said to hold converse with a familiar spirit; to correspond with the devil, be a bawd to him, and stand pimp for him, is the quintessence of spiritual wickedness; yet to give this daughter of the devil her due, it must be granted that she was not without some modesty, for she never reproaches the king for what he had done, only says to his messenger, *Behold thou knowest what Saul has done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land, wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?* 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. Yet even this woman, who had lost so many brothers and sisters in profession, did not write to ridicule the king, though he had destroyed so many of her own synagogue, that belonged to the same fraternity, or was familiar with the same father; nor does she inveigh against any of the children of Israel whom Saul employed to cut off the wizards and witches; and so far is she from writing two-penny volumes against the Lord's servants, that she is frightened at the appearance of her own father when he had swaddled himself up in the likeness of Samuel's mantle. For when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice, and the woman said, *Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid, for what sawest thou? and the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth, for an old man cometh up covered with a mantle,* 1 Sam. xxviii. 12, 13, 14.

This

This woman is so far from opposing the prophets of God, that she could not *stand* before the *devil* when he was *disguised* in a *prophet's mantle*, until the king *encouraged* her, and told her not to be *afraid*.

Among all the *women* that are called *mothers in Israel*—among all the *women* that are called *blessed*—among all that are called *faithful*—among all that are called *propheteesses* of the *Lord*—among all that are called *honourable women*—among all that are said to *minister* to the *Saviour*, or *help* his servants; nay, not one among the *false propheteesses*, not Herodias herself; not one among Paul's *tattling women*, who *waxed wanton*, learned to be *idle*, *wandering about from house to house*; not one of the *old wives* that dealt in *fables*; not one of the *witches* that held familiarity with the devil himself, had ever courage or insolence enough to *write against the servants of the Lord* but JEZEBEL; who, among all the *females* that ever were born of women, was the most infamous for *spiritual wickedness* and *murder*; and her end was as dreadful as her life was vile. She *wrote letters in Abab's name*, and *sealed them with his seal*, and *sent the letters unto the elders*, and to the nobles that were in *Abab's city dwelling with Naboth*. This woman was not afraid to send her *address* from house to house; she desired to shew her abilities—she was not ashamed of the *cause* she espoused. She *wrote in the letters*, saying, *Proclaim a fast* [this woman was not without religion—she enforced fasting],



*and set Naboth on high among the people; that is, she pretended to exalt him as one of God's servants, but conceals her villanous intention; and when you have done this then set the children of the devil at him—set two men, sons of Belial [or the devil] before him, to bear witness against him [charge him with antinomianism and disloyalty], saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king; and then carry him out, and stone him that he may die.— And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles (who are no great friends to religion), did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent; and they proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. I suppose they said they had no doubt of his being a servant of the Lord: And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him. I suppose one was a plaisterer, and the other a musician; be that as it may, they enforced the law, and shewed they were no friends to Antinomianism, nor to party spirits, for they agreed in their verdict. And the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. These men enforced the moral law, and shewed their loyalty in bearing a public witness against this singular man, who would not part with his vineyard; Then they carried Naboth forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones that he died, 1 Kings xxi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.*

This

This venerable *mother Jezabel* is all the precedent that our present *prophetess* has got to countenance her in writing against the servants of God; and the *mystical body*, to which this name *Jezabel* is now applied, is as pregnant with mischief, and as unsatiated for the blood of the saints, as her literal mother was, and all the artillery of God is levelled at her; even at *popish Jezabel*, who calls herself a *prophetess* and pretends to teach. From these few observations it may be seen how the servants of God have fared in every age; and I shall endeavour to shew that the best of men have been charged with *antinomianism*, and of being influenced by a *bad spirit*; though it must be acknowledged, that the devil never could harden any women to write against the servants of God but *Jezabel*.

In prophetic times the *prophets* were called fools; *spiritual men* were called mad; the snare of a fowler in all his ways, and was hated in the house of his God, Hos. ix. 7, 8. If he was a fool he was tinctured with *enthusiasm*, and if mad he was influenced by a *bad spirit*, for all madness is of the devil. Christ was accused of being influenced by a *bad spirit*; they said he cast out devils by *Beelzebub*, who was the God of Ekron; he was accused of *antinomianism*—*This man is not of God*—he makes void the law—he keepeth not the sabbath, John ix. 16. he was accused of *disloyalty*—he speaketh against *Cæsar*, John xix. 12.

Paul was accused of *teaching the people to forsake Moses*, and of *doing evil that good might come*;

and all these enemies pretended great zeal *for the law*; even *Jezabel* herself fled for refuge here, as hath been already observed. It appears evident that the worst adversaries that ever Christ or his church have had upon earth, were hypocritical professors of religion; and all their rage and murder that they committed upon the saints, was always done under a cloak of zeal for the *holy law of God*. *Jezabel* pretended to act by this rule: *Naboth blasphemed God and the king—stone him to death. Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him, Levit. xxiv. 15, 16.*

The Jews took shelter under the law when they crucified Christ; *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the son of God, John xix. 7.* But the holy law of God was no protection for them; it countenances no murderer, no false witness, no hypocrite, no slanderer, no false teacher, no false accuser; *Did not Moses give you the law? and yet none of you keep the law: Why go ye about to kill me, John vii. 19.* When the Saviour brought the law against them, they accused him of a *bad spirit*; they said, *Thou hast a devil. Who goeth about to kill thee? verse 20.* This was the Jews plea against Paul: *And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses; saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs,*  
Acts



Acts xxi. 21. The *rulers* that attempted to put Paul to death at Jerusalem put on this cloak:—*Thou seest brother Paul how many thousands there are that believe, and they are all zealous of the law,* Acts xxi. 20. And under this cloak of maliciousness they laid violent hands upon the apostle, crying out, *Men of Israel help; this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place,* verse 28. Poor Stephen was murdered under this cloak: *Then they suborned men which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us,* Acts vi. 11. 14.

Thus it appears how the *children* of the *free-woman* have been put to death by the *children* of *Hagar*; and all under a cloak of zeal for the law. Modern hypocrites fly here when they attempt to ridicule the grace of God; yea, even *Pharisees*, who are farther from the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots, will charge the children of God with want of *love to holiness*. Yet none of these persecutors and murderers were destitute of *candour*. It is true, they used *sharpness* against the saints; yet even *Jezabel*, though she charged *Naboth* with antinomianism, or making void the law, by *blaspheming God and the king*, yet she shewed much *gentleness* and *candour* to some that were of a different persuasion, for she kept *four hundred* of these at her own table.

But I suppose you want to know what these people mean by *candour*. Let me once more describe an *hypocritical professor of religion*; though I have touched upon him before in this discourse, yet I will stir up your pure minds again by way of remembrance.

First, They attend alarming preachers, and receive some *light* into the *letter* of the *law*; which light does not reach the heart to discover sin, but the *head* only, which is *enlightened* into the letter of the law; *they have a form of knowledge* [that is all] *and of the truth in the law*, Rom. ii. 20. This *form of knowledge* is the *lamp* which these *foolish virgins* take; the *law* is a *light* to their feet, *the commandment is a lamp*, Prov. vi. 23. These are said, as Paul said of himself, to be *alive without the law*; that is, they are alive to this their *form of knowledge*, and accordingly make this *form* their only and all-sufficient *rule of life*; and no wonder, when they have not got the law at all—they are *alive without the law*—the law has not killed them. To this *form of knowledge* which they are alive to, they perform a deal of *eye-service*, which is mercenary; such as the elder son boasted of, who told his father *that he never transgressed his commandment at any time, saying, Lo, these many years do I serve thee*, Luke xv. 29. *in the oldness of the letter*, Rom. vii. 6. To this *form of knowledge out of the law*, the hypocrite adds an *assent* to the truths of the gospel; the *law* is his *lamp* and his *rule*—the *gospel* serves

only for a cloak. To this *assent* to the truths of the gospel, they add a reformation of *life and manners*, which is called *escaping the pollution that is in the world*; and their apostacy is called a *turning from the holy commandment*, not from the *promise of Christ*, nor the *grace of God*, but from the *holy commandment delivered to them*, 2 Peter ii. 20, 21. To this *form of knowledge* out of the law, and *assent* to the gospel (or what is called a *feigned faith*), and an *external reformation*, they add one thing more, which makes the hypocrite pass in disguise into the church; which is, they shew their *wisdom*, in being *forward to talk*; they are diligent in their *will worship*, and put on the garb of *voluntary humility*, Coloss. ii. 18. 23. which completes the *spiced or perfumed hypocrite*, who hath been *sweetened and embalmed* by an empty profession, and appears to be *changed* by the gospel just as *lemon peel* is by *clarified sugar*; hence their *flummery or candour* is called a *sweet spirit*; and such a *disguised perfumed hypocrite* is called a *candid person*. There were great numbers of old women in Jerusalem who made a livelihood by such *meekness and candour* as this; they were called mourning women, and used to be hired at burials to weep and mourn when the surviving could not do it; you might have enough of it if you had but money to pay them for it. God talks of these hypocrites: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider ye, and call for mourning women, and send for cunning women that



that they may come, and let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, Jer. ix. 17, 18. But what has all this to do with a saint of God? he is quite another thing; the law *proceeds from God to him*; he *receives it at his mouth, and lays up his words in his heart*; the commandment comes with power, sin revives and he dies, and then rises with Christ under the operations of the Spirit of God; such walk in newness of life, and serve in the newness of the Spirit, follow Christ in the regeneration, and go from strength to strength till they appear before God in Zion; and as many as walk according to this rule, mercy on them and peace, and upon the Israel of God.

From what has been said, it is plain, there is nothing in this text that militates against a labourer in the Lord's vineyard, or against a good soldier of Christ Jesus; nor is there any thing in it that countenances or encourages *sensual men or mourning women*, to vilify, slander, or ridicule the servants of God as being destitute of candour. The same God that tells me to be gentle, tells me to use sharpness where it is wanted; to be gentle to all men, yet to reject an heretic after the first or second admonition; to be apt to teach, and yet to stop the mouths of gainsayers; to reprove and rebuke, as well as comfort and encourage; to honour widows that are widows indeed; but not to suffer idle, tattling, canting women to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man; to insist upon such women's using the spindle and distaff, instead of eating  
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*the bread of idleness and living upon the labour of others. Behold this was the iniquity of their sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, Ezek. xvi. 49. and 'tis women that give themselves over to the same lazy life, that are bringing the same fiery judgments on their own souls; who, rather than work with their hands, will pretend even to the Spirit of grace, counterfeit religion, injure the ministry, oppose the servants of God, and expose the worshippers of him to contempt at the doors of the congregation, and set the uncircumcised to triumph in order to pick up a few pence, to indulge their idleness rather than stoop to the needle, or to the honest calling of gathering a few rags, or selling laces and pins. Such set themselves up for prophetesses and teachers, and so blind the eyes of poor simple people and mump a livelihood out of them, while these poor honest souls think they are serving Christ, by housing and feeding his saints; whereas they are only serving the devil, nursing his hypocritical family, and bringing themselves to poverty. God says, If they will not work neither shall they eat; keep such tattling hypocrites as these out of your houses; enquire after the experience of their religion, and keep your pantry door locked, and they will soon have done with you, when they find you destitute of candour. Remember, a real believer thinks 'tis more blessed to give than to receive; a true christian is diligent in business and fervent in spirit. Such idle, tattling, graceless women who pretend to the Spirit of God, while*

while they are destitute of his operations and act so diametrically opposite to the word of the Lord, sin with an higher hand than I did when in a state of nature; for even then there appeared something so sacred and awful in the name *Holy Spirit* or *Holy Ghost*, that I never cared even to mention it unless in reading; but these hardened hypocrites are more undaunted than Simon Magus; he offered to buy the Spirit with money, and these pretend to be influenced by him in order to get money. God shall discover *this woman*, whom I believe to be destitute of all *reverence* of God or *fear* of him. And Mr. *Holywellmount*, who bought ninety two-penny volumes to circulate in order to injure me in the work of the Lord, he knows nothing of the *plague of his own heart*, nor of a *spiritual birth*; and as for Sir *Ham Cottish* and Mr. *Belly*, God never sent them at all to preach his word. As I have *obtained mercy*, I hope to be *found faithful*, to *try the spirits whether they are of God*, and to *try them which say they are apostles or evangelists*, and to *prove them liars* if they are not. This is a work that belongs to the Lord's servants, and God in his own time shall *bring forth our righteousness as the light*, and *our judgment as the noon day*; and then it shall be made manifest who are his and who not. Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, now and for ever. Amen and Amen.

4 JY 59

F I N I S.